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ABSTRACT

The articles in this themed issue focus on the use of real literature in reading instruction. Following a comment from the editor, the titles of the articles and their authors are as follows: (1) "Understanding Poetry: Questions to Consider" (Nancy Wiseman Seminoff); (2) "Experiencing a Novel: The Short and Long of It" (David M. Bishop and Rosemary Ingham); (3) "Literacy through Literature: Improving on the Basal" (Michael W. Higgins); (4) "Toto, I Don't Think We're in Workbooks Anymore" (Jim Paprocki); (5) "Exceptional Needs Students Deserve Literature Too" (Diane L. Endres); (6) "Children's Books Related to Computers" (Maribeth A. Henney); (7) "Literacy, Literature, and Reading Aloud" (Rosalind Wold); (8) "Research Update: Children's Literature and Reading" (Cecilia Schrenker); and (9) "Bibliotherapy" (ERIC Clearinghouse). Also included is a section of the best works of Wisconsin's young authors, and the Pat Bricker Memorial Award announcement. (HTH)

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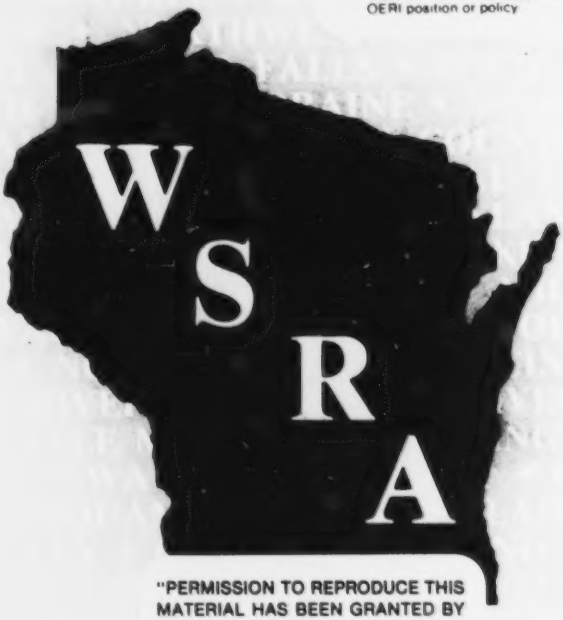

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Wisconsin State Reading Association

Journal

Theme

LITERATURE AND READING

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WISCONSIN
STATE
READING
ASSOCIATION

WSRA

About The Cover

Without its 21 local councils, WSRA could not exist. This cover is dedicated to all the teachers, reading specialists, administrators, professors, parents, and others who belong to the local reading councils in Wisconsin.

Design by Michael P. French

Teaching Reading Comprehension in the Primary Grades

2 credits, Undergraduate or Graduate
University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire (Education 495-695)

Course Description

This is a telecourse which focuses on the most recent developments in reading-comprehension research. The course is designed to help teachers, reading supervisors, and reading teachers improve their knowledge of how to use the interactive model of reading comprehension instruction with primary-grade students.

This course includes the viewing of fourteen 30-minute television programs which will be broadcast over the state Public Television Network Tuesdays at 3:30 pm. starting September 9. Students enrolled in the course also will study coordinated print materials and participate in discussion sessions via the SEEN Teleconference Network. Beginning September 8 discussion sessions meet at SEEN sites from 4:30-6:20 p.m. on Mondays, every other week. Instructor is Sherry Macaul, Assistant Professor of Elementary Education (715-836-2031). For further information contact Dick Florence University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire (715-836-2031).

The television programs focus on the following topics:

The current view of reading comprehension instruction
The nature of reading comprehension instruction today
The reading-writing relationship/the language experience approach
Semantic mapping
Word meaning
Integrating word analysis
Basic inference
Teaching cohesion comprehension
Story mapping
Questioning
Main idea
Independent seatwork
Developing active constructive readers within the basal reader structure
Becoming strategic readers/strategic teachers

The television programs exemplify the new Wisconsin Interactive Model of Reading Comprehension which focuses on the relationships between the reader, text, and context. Each program addresses the main topic from the perspective of helping students to understand what they read and to understand their interactive role with text and context. Most programs begin with an interview of a well-known researcher who explains her/his reading comprehension research. Then the program presents at least one classroom demonstration which shows specific methods and classroom applications related to that research.

Funding for this telecourse came from the United States Department of Education and the Wisconsin Public Television Network. The designers of the series content were Dr. Mary Jett-Simpson, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee; Dr. Sandra Dahl, writer of "Basal Readers," and Doris Cook, Reading Supervisor, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, who worked under the direction of Dr. Tom DeRose, manager of program development for the Wisconsin Public Television Network. Writer of the related print materials was Dr. Jett-Simpson who worked with editor Barb Roe. The course was the focus of a research project conducted by Dr. Marge Wilsman during Fall 1985 in the Oregon School District with 26 K-8 teachers. (See article by Boyd and Wilsman in Spring issue of the *WSRA Journal.)*

From the editor: A final comment

Michael P. French
University of Wisconsin-Madison
Madison, Wisconsin

It hardly seems possible that this is my last Journal as editor. In the last twelve issues, I have, on behalf of the Wisconsin State Reading Association, been responsible for providing the organizational leadership for this publication. However, any success in this endeavor would not have been possible without the support of several highly professional and dedicated educators. I would like to take this opportunity to mention and thank the following people who have played important roles in the publication of the WSRA Journal.

First, I would like to thank the Presidents of WSRA who have served during my time as editor: Laura Holmgren, Donna Thomas, Judy Casey, and now Paul Majerle. They all have provided a great deal of support to me in my performance as Journal Editor.

Next, I would like to thank the two individuals who served as chairpersons of the Publication Committee during the last three years: Craig Hitchens and Doug Buehl. Without their support and encouragement, the WSRAJ could not have grown to its present form.

I would especially like to mention those members of WSRA who served as my Editorial Advisory Board: Elaine Anderson, Doug Buehl, Shirley Elford, Michael Higgins, Mildred Hoffman, Melva Kleist, and Walter Prentice. They were always right there with their reviews of manuscripts and advice. I thank you all.

Without the Contributing Editors, the Journal would not have the balance it does. To these writers, Kris Burgett, Alan Jante, Craig Hitchens, Tom Van Ert, Mary Jett-Simpson, Doug Vance, and Judy Schaumberg, I give special thanks for sharing their time and talents with our readers.

I would also like to thank the former editors of the Journal, Cecilia Schrenker and Sue Jund. Both were always willing to give technical assistance and encouragement. They helped me a great deal in learning the "job" of editor.

Representing the International Reading Association, I would like to thank Jennifer Stevenson, the Director of Publications for her support of reading in Wisconsin, and the two State Coordinators who have supported this Journal: Roger Quealy and Doug Vance.

There are others I would like to thank as well. I would like to thank Kathy Knutsen, a member of the membership committee who assisted in the mailing of the Journal. I would also like to thank Pam Sadowske and Sue Freund, from Masterprint in Beaver Dam, the typesetters who made the format of the Journal a reality.

And last but not least, I would like to thank my Associate Editor, Shirley Elford. Although Shirley came to the Journal in the latter years of my tenure, her assistance and support have been a critical part of this publication. She will have my everlasting thanks as I think back on these three years.

In closing, to all those who wrote in the WSRA Journal since 1983, I give my thanks; to those who read and learned from it, I give my regards and best wishes for the coming years; to my predecessor, Jim Devine, I give my encouragement and support.

Understanding poetry: Questions to consider

Nancy Wiseman Seminoff
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Marquette, Michigan

Poetry continues to be one of the most important genre of the secondary English curriculum. However, lack of understanding of poetry continues to be one of the main sources of frustration for students. This frustration is probably shared by teachers who are teaching out of their discipline as well as those whose love for poetry is not shared by all students.

Literature anthologies abound with written questions intended to assist students in understanding the linguistic forms of Shelley and Browning, and teachers' oral questions admonish students to respond to the messages of Frost or Sandburg. Supposedly, one purpose of these questions is to assist students to comprehend the messages of the poems. Do these questions, however, actually promote comprehension?

It seems reasonable that posing written questions to elicit students' responses will guide their thinking and untimately lead to improved comprehension of poetry. The further assumption is that students will ultimately become independent readers, and, hopefully, lovers of poetry. The question remains, however, whether the written questions presented by the publisher, i.e., text questions (either in the student's edition or the teacher's guide) or those generated by the teacher actually help or hinder this effort.

In 1982, this author examined questions which accompanied poetry selections in four leading American literature anthologies. (Inspection of revisions of these same textbooks and other texts indicates that the questions have not changed appreciably.) Each of the anthologies met the following criteria.

1. The selections were organized in a historical chronology.
2. The textbooks were hard-covered major compilations of American literature.
3. They were edited by one or more major editors.
4. They contained questions in the student edition.
5. They were recognized by their competitors as leaders in the field.

Ten percent of the poems were randomly selected from each of the four textbooks and 126 questions which accompanied these 44 poems were analyzed. There were, then, slightly less than 3 questions per poem. (See Table 1 below.)

Table 1
Number of Poems and Questions by Test

Text Title	Number Poems	Number Questions	Questions per poem
1. *Adventure in American Literature* (HBJ, 1980)	14	38	2.7
2. *American Literature* (Ginn, 1981)	8	31	3.8
3. *America* (HM, 1981)	9	21	2.3
4. *U.S. in Literature* (S.F., 1979)	13	36	2.7
TOTALS	44	126	2.8

Characteristics and Levels of Questions

The author identified specific characteristics which, when present in questions, seemed useful in assisting students in comprehending assigned reading (Herber, 1978; Sanders, 1974). Clarity, objectivity, structure, and sequence are four of these characteristics. *Clarity*, the first characteristic, means that there should be no uncertainty about what the student is to do in order to respond correctly to the question. The language of the question should be precise, not vague.

An example of a question which possesses clarity is:

List the reason which explains why the person in the poem never returned to the place where the two roads divide. ("The Road Not Taken" - Example 1)

An example of a question which lacks clarity is:

How is the main point of "Ozymandias" reflected in events which have happened? ("Ozymandias" - Example 2)

In the first example, the word "list" is a task word and the phrase "never returned to the place where the two roads divide" provides some perameters, or boundaries, to guide the student's response. In the second example, the term "how" is, at best, a vague interrogative to which a student could respond variously, e.g., very clearly, not very clearly, etc.

A second characteristic, *objectivity,* requires that the phrasing of the question not intentionally reveal or imply support for the question writer's point of view.

An example of a question which possesses objectivity is:

Why do you think the writer will be telling about his decision "with a sigh"? (The Road Not Taken" - Example 1)

An example which lacks objectivity is:

Does this poem describe decisions a person must make in life? ("The Road Not Taken" - Example 1)

A third characteristic, *structure,* refers to the guidance or help built into the question to assist the student in responding. This guidance might include words, phrases, or sentences for the student to manipulate or consider, thus allowing the student merely to react to a response rather than requiring a student to initiate the response. Guidance might also be in the form of locational aids, such as page numbers, column numbers, paragraph numbers, and the like.

An example of a question which possesses structure is:

Consider lines 1-9 of the poem, "Ozymandias" - Example 2.

A. Place a line through those phrases which are *not* stated in these lines.
-two vast and trunkless legs of stone
-on the sand, half sunk, a shatered visage lies
-I met a traveler from an antique land who said
-a sculptor read of an antique land
-a sculptor well those passions read which yet survive
-frown and wrinkled lip
-sneer of cold command
-hand that mocked them

B. Using the phrases which remain in part A, decide which of the following statements appear to be reasonable conclusions. Place an X beside each statement to indicate your choice(s).

____ 1. Only parts of the statue remain.
____ 2. The whole statue stands intact in the desert.
____ 3. The person viewing the statue is sneering and frowning.
____ 4. A traveler is telling a story to the poet and reader.
____ 5. The poet is telling what he sees on a trip.
____ 6. The hand of the statue is lying on the ground.
____ 7. A sculptor has captured the king's cold, boastful personality in the face of the monument.

An example which lacks structure is:

State two possible interpretations of this poem. ("Ozymandias" - Example 2)

A fourth characteristic, *sequence,* requires each question within a set of questions (i.e., all of the questions which accompany a given poem) to be presented in a logical order. The earlier questions establish a base of information and/or conclusions for responding to later questions. These first questions develop a preliminary "fund of information" which can be elaborated on in following questions, thereby creating a gradual expanding sense of meanings.

An example of a *set* of questions which exemplify sequence based on Frost's "A Road Not Taken" is as follows:

Example 1

THE ROAD NOT TAKEN
Robert Frost

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth,

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I--
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

From *The Poetry of Robert Frost,* edited by Edward Connery Lathem. Copyright 1916, (c) 1969 by Holt, Rinehart and Winston. Copyright 1944 by Robert Frost. Reprinted by permission of Henry Holt and Company.

Example I
"The Road Not Taken"

I. Listed below are some statements the poet could be making in the first stanza of the poem.

A. Decide which statement(s) seems reasonable and indicate your choice(s) by placing an X beside the statement(s) you choose.

____ 1. The poet met a traveler on a road in the woods.
____ 2. There are two roads in the woods.
____ 3. The poet is really the traveler.
____ 4. The road is impossible to walk down because of the undergrowth.
____ 5. The poet looked as far down the road as he could see.
____ 6. The poet wishes he could take both roads.

B. Consider the choices in I-A. Decide which of the following statements seems reasonable and place an X beside the statement(s) you choose.

____ 1. The poet is talking about himself.
____ 2. The poet is faced with deciding which of two opportunities he will choose.
____ 3. The poet really doesn't care which of the choices he makes.
____ 4. The poet takes a long time to look at the road.

II. Listed below are characteristics of the two roads. Decide which items best describe the road the poet finally chooses. Indicate your answers by drawing a line through those items which you do not choose.

— having perhaps the better claim
— bent in the undergrowth
— grassy
— as just as fair
— wanted wear
— really worn about the same
— the first road to be considered
— in leaves no step had trodden black

III. Place an X beside those statements which are reasonable conclusions about the road the poet chose.

____ A. The two roads looked equally appealing.
____ B. "Oh, I kept the first for another day" indicates he made a decision.
____ C. The poet does not tell which road he chose.
____ D. "Having perhaps the better claim" means he saw something in the road he wanted to pick up.

IV. "Yet knowing how way leads on to way, I doubted if I should ever come back." Indicate which statement(s) are reasonable conclusions about the poet's intent in the above two lines by placing an X beside the statement(s).

____ A. Up to this point in the poem the poet is trying to make a decision.
____ B. The poet has still not made a decision about which road to take.
____ C. "Way leads to way" indicates that one decision we make influences other decisions we make.
____ D. It is possible for the poet to return to the fork in the road and take the other path once he has tried the first path.

V. Refer to the last stanza of the poem. Which of the following choices seems to be supported in that stanza and/or the title? Place an X beside those statements you choose.

___ A. The poet is commenting on this choice.
___ B. He is looking back on his decision.
___ C. He chose the road which was not as popular or traveled as the other road.
___ D. The "sigh" shows he regrets his choice.
___ E. The poet was affected by his choice and cannot return to make that exact same choice, or that alternate one, again in the same circumstances.
___ F. The title indicates the poet wishes he had chosen the other road.

VI. Consider your responses in questions I-V. What "larger" meaning does the poem suggest? Indicate your reaction to this question by placing an X beside the statement(s) below which you choose.

___ A. The roads could represent choices of opportunities in life.
___ B. The title suggests the poet is focusing on the opportunity he did not choose.
___ C. Frost suggests his choice has had a major effect on his life in some way.
___ D. Other _____

In addition to the four characteristics described in the preceding paragraphs, posing questions which call for various levels of response can help students comprehend the assigned reading. Herber (1978) describes comprehension as consisting of three levels of response: literal, interpretive, and application. While other questioning taxonomies (e.g., Pearson and Johnson, 1978; Barrett, 1979; Sanders, 1968; Raphael, 1981) exist, the Herber taxonomy was employed in this study.

Literal questions focus students' attention on information provided in the text, i.e., text explicit information.

An example of a literal question is:

What lines in the poem show that the girl is concerned about her appearance?

Interpretative questions ask students to look for relationships among text explicit information and to derive conclusions from these informational statements as well as from conclusions previously drawn from the text. The students are required to discern meaning(s) not stated explicitly in the text.

An example of an interpretative question is:

Which statement(s) could be possible conclusions from the poem? Use an "X" to indicate your choice(s). ("Ozymandias" - Example 2)

____1. The first part of the poem suggests a feeling of the great power Ozymandias had.
____2. The reader feels the greatness of Ozymandias as the poem ends.
____3. Ozymandias considered himself a great king.
____4. The monument can be considered a paradox.
____5. Other _____

Application questions request the students to combine conclusions produced at the interpretative level and synthesize them with the students' previous knowledge and experience.

An example of an application question is:

Decide which statement(s) are reasonable interpretations of the larger dimensions of the poem. Indicate your choice(s) with an X. ("Ozymandias" - Example 2)

____1. Time and nature conquered man's effort to leave a permanent record of his accomplishments on earth.
____2. Ozymandias could represent any person.
____3. All statues are paradoxes.
____4. Other _____

The Study

In this study, four colleagues (two experienced high school literature teachers, a reading specialist, and a librarian) were trained over a two month period to rate and to categorize questions. Each of the 126 questions was rated using a five-point scale (ranging from a low of 1 to a high of 5) for clarity, objectivity, and structure, and each of the set of questions was rated for sequence by using the same five-point scale. In addition, each question was categorized by level of response -- literal, interpretative, application.

The average score of clarity, objectivity, and structure, was computed for the 126 questions and the average score for sequence was computed for the 44 sets of questions. The categories -- literal, interpretative, and application - were examined by inspecting only those questions where at least three of the four raters agreed on the categorizing of each question. A total of 112 of the original 126 questions were examined.

Findings and Conclusions

126 questions from 44 selections in four textbooks were analyzed. There were, then, slightly less than three questions per selection (See Table 1.) Since many teachers consider poetry the most difficult form of literature, it is disturbing, and possibly ironic, that so little assistance in the form of instructional questions is provided for this genre. If textbook questions are to be useful, they should be provided in sufficient number to be effective.

Of the 112 questions agreed upon by at least three of the four judges, 98 were identified as interpretative. Only six of the questions were judged to be literal -- approximately one literal question for every seven poems in the total group of 44. One cannot help wondering whether students can "interpret" a poem without identifying the

necessary literal information; perhaps the identification of the necessary literal information is assumed by the text editors. However, if the literal basis for responding to interpretative level questions is important, it is disturbing so few literal questions are provided for students to consider.

On a five-point scale, with one defined as low and five defined as high, the 126 questions were rated 1.84 on clarity, 2.99 on objectivity, and 1.65 on structure. On all three of these qualities, the poetry questions were rated below average -- and well below average on two of the qualities, clarity and structure. Here is a doubly disturbing irony. First, it is disturbing that although poetry is considered a difficult genre for readers, the guidance questions rank low on qualities considered important by reading and literature specialists. Second, it is disturbing that in classrooms where qualities of good reading models should be provided, there are such poor models provided in the instructional materials. Sequence for the 44 poems was rated as 2.27, not surprising considering the extensive number of interpretative questions in most of the poems. It is also worth noting that there are only one guidance question for each of four poems and only two questions for each of 13 poems.

The study found there are significant differences between the texts (which were among the best sellers in the eleventh grade literature anthologies), but none of these differences were great enough to suggest that one or the other of the texts had acceptable guidance questions for its poetry selections. There are not enough literal questions to assist students who have a problem gaining an even initial understanding of the poems. The questions clearly need more structure and clarity. Only on objectivity can the questions be considered as possibly acceptable. Because poetry is a highly subjective genre, it is hoped that any lack of objectivity is unintentional rather than deliberate. However, students cannot learn to appreciate this subjectivity if they are not provided the assistance they need to gain a basic understanding of the poems.

Implications for the English Curriculum

What kinds of questions are available to help students understand poetry...questions which appear to lack clarity and structure and appear to be somewhat more objective. The questions are overwhelmingly interpretative in nature, thereby providing minimal assurance that the literal imagery students perceive is really appropriate and correct.

The anthologies provide few questions to assist students in comprehending the meanings of the poems. If questioning is indeed important, it is difficult to imagine the assistance that can be provided by

a single question or even two questions. Recognizing that the poems themselves are often not lengthy and that merely posing questions in no way assures comprehension, it is, nonetheless, important to consider posing a sufficient number to assist students in accummulating information from which to draw conclusions.

Many school systems select anthologies on the basis of their accompanying instructional aids. It is imperative that publishers pose the clearest, most effective questions to make maximum use of text space and to pose appropriate models for instruction. This point is of particular importance as one considers the number of teachers who are teaching out of their major and minor areas of study.

Teachers have a responsibility for examining the questions posed in anthologies to determine if these questions are in fact most appropriate for their instructional purposes. Not only should consideration be given to the characteristics and levels discussed in this article, but also equal consideration should be given to the extent to which the questions are appropriate for the teacher's instructional purposes, i.e., leading students to reasonable initial conclusions. Only after the teacher has analyzed the content of the poem and identified for initial discussion ideas/understandings suggested by the poem can that teacher determine the extent to which the questions are appropriate. Teachers, therefore, should be able to generate effective questions themselves rather than be a slave to an anthology of instructional materials. For example, a teacher might wish to pose the set of questions provided in Example 2 or 3, *if the understandings stated there are consistent with the teacher's interpretation of the poems.*

Considering the limited instructional time available in the English literature classroom for assisting students to comprehend poetry, it is imperative for teachers to ask the most effective questions to help students learn. Considering the limited preparation time available to literature teachers, it is imperative that publishers provide the most useful questions possible. As teachers continue to become more conscious of the characteristics and design of effective questions, and as they become increasingly familiar with the reading process and recent reading research, they can use this knowledge to insist that publishers provide instructional materials that are worthy of their students' time and their time. Teachers can also be expected to construct their own appropriate instructional questions.

As Dewey stated so long ago, "A question well put is already half answered." Teachers must know where they want to lead students and then do so. Students can be helped to understand poetry if teachers pose instructional questions which are tools for understanding, i.e., guidance questions rather than weapons for punishment, i.e., test questions.

Example 2
"Ozymandias"

I met a traveler from an antique land
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them and the heart that fed:
And on the pedestal these words appear:
"My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair:"
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

Example 2
"Ozymandias"

FOR THE TEACHER:

Understandings (not to be shared with the students)

— A king attempted to imprint his accomplishments on the face of the earth, but his attempt was futile.

— Man's power (efforts of accomplishment) seem insignificant when compared to the power of time and nature.

FOR THE STUDENT:

To be given to students to use during or at the conclusion of reading the poem, to be completed individually, and time provided for discussion in small groups of 3-5 once each student has responded individually.

Questions

1. Consider lines 1-9 of the poem, "Ozymandias."
   A. Place a line through those phrases which are not suggested in these lines.
      — two vast and trunkless legs of stone
      — on the sand, half sunk, a shattered visage lies
      — I met a traveler from an intique land who said
      — a sculptor well those passions read which yet survive
      — frown and wrinkled lip
      — sneer of cold command
      — hand that mocked them

B. Consider the phrases which remain in Part A; decide which of the following statements appear to be reasonable conclusions. Place an X beside each statement to indicate your choice(s).

____ A. Only parts of the statue remain.
____ B. The whole statue stands intact in the desert.
____ C. The person viewing the statue is sneering and frowning.
____ D. A traveler is telling a story to the poet and reader.
____ E. The poet is telling what he sees on a trip.
____ F. The hand of the statue is lying on the ground.
____ G. A sculptor has captured the king's cold, boastful personality in the face of the monument.

II. Refer to lines 10-14. Which of the following statements are suggested in these lines? Indicate your choice with an X.

____ A. The people in that country built a monument to honor their great king.
____ B. The inscription suggests that no one else can accomplish anything as great as Ozymandias.
____ C. Ozymandias wanted future generations to realize his greatness.
____ D. The monument is standing beside a colossal wreck.
____ E. The last few lines suggest a sense of lonliness and ruin.

III. Consider your reponses in I-II.

A. Which statement(s) could be possible conclusions i.e., the poem?

____ 1. The first part of the poem suggests a feeling of the great power Ozymandias had.
____ 2. The reader feels the greatness of Ozymandias as the poem ends.
____ 3. Ozymandias considered himself a great king.
____ 4. The monument can be considered a paradox.
____ 5. Other _____

B. Decide which statement(s) are reasonable interpretations of the larger dimensions of the poem. Indicate your choice(s) with an X.

____ 1. Time and nature conquered man's effort to leave a permanent record of his accomplishments on earth.
____ 2. Ozymandias could represent any person.
____ 3. All statues are paradoxes.
____ 4. Other _____

Example 3

ON THE MOVE
"Man you gotta go"

Thom Gunn

The blue jay scuffling in the bushes follows
Some hidden purpose, and the gust of birds
That spurts across the fields, the wheeling swallows,
Have nested in the trees and undergrowth.
Seeking their instinct, or their poise, or both,
One moves with an uncertain violence
Under the dust thrown by a baffled sense
Or the dull thunder of approximate words.

On motorcyles, up the road, they come:
Small, black, as flies hanging in heat, the Boys,
Until the distance throws them forth, their hum
Bulges to thunder held by calf and thigh.
In goggles, donned impersonality,
In gleaming jackets trophied with the dust,
They strap indoubt--by hiding it robust--
And almost hear a meaning in their noise.

Exact conclusion of their hardiness
Has no shape yet, but from whereabouts
They ride, direction where the tires press.
They scare a flight of birds across the field:
Much that is natural, to the will must yield.
Men manufacture both machine and soul,
And use what they imperfectly control
To dare a future from the taken routes.

It is a part solution, after all,
One is not necessarily discord
On earth; or damned because, half animal,
One lacks direct instinct, because one wakes
Afloat on movement that divides and breaks.
One joins the movement in a valueless world,
Choosing it, till, both hurler and the hurled,
One moves as well, always toward, toward.

A minute holds them who have come to go:
The self-denied, astride the created will
They burst away; the towns they travel through
Are home for neither bird nor holiness,
For birds and saints complete their purposes.
At worst, one is in motion; and at best,
Reaching no absolute, in which to rest,
One is always nearer by not keeping still.

"On the Move" from MOLY AND MY SAD CAPTAINS by Thom Gunn. Copyright (c) 1961, 1979, 1973. Reprinted by permission of Farrar, Straus and Giroux, Inc.

Example 3

ON THE MOVE

FOR THE TEACHER:

Understandings (not to be shared with the students)

- Through constant movement one does not need to face reality, have a purpose, or make a decision.
- Movement is often for movement's sake.
- Man attempts to establish a place for himself in the world by identifying with groups.

FOR THE STUDENTS:

To be given to students during or at the conclusion of reading the poem, to be completed individually, and time provided for discussion in small groups fo 3-5 once each student has responded individually.

Questions

I. Decide which items characterize the birds and which items characterize the motorcyclists. Indicate your decisions by placing a **B** to represent birds or an **M** to represent motorcyclist beside each item.

___ 1. in goggles and gleaming jacket
___ 2. nested in trees and undergrowth
___ 3. seek instinct or poise, or both
___ 4. almost a meaning in their noise
___ 5. strapped to their machine
___ 6. move with uncertain violence under dust thrown by a baffled sense or the dull thunder of approximate words
___ 7. hum bulges to thunder of approximate words
___ 8. exact conclusion of their hardiness has no shape yet

II. Consider your choices in question I and decide which statements are reasonable conclusions. Place an X beside each choice.

___ A. The "donned impersonality" of the motorcyclists is created partially by the clothing they wear.
___ B. The birds are presented in a natural setting of trees and undergrowth while the boys appear to blend in naturally with the machines they ride.
___ C. The motorcyclists appear to be almost hidden in their own noise.
___ D. The motorcyclists appear to move through instinct with a definite purpose.
___ E. The birds appear to move through instinct.

III. Some of the statements the author makes in the poem are listed below. Decide which statements are reasonable interpretations of each quotation, and indicate your choices by placing an X beside each.

A. "Much that is natural to the will must yield."
___ 1. Men often manufacture a reason for some action.
___ 2. Man's actions can cause an unlikely reaction to occur.
___ 3. The motorcyclists caused the birds to fly away from their natural setting.
___ 4. As a group, the motorcyclists feel in control of their destination.
___ 5. Other _____

B. "A minute holds them who have come to go."
___ 1. Someone is preparing to take a quick trip and will return shortly.
___ 2. Someone on the move only stays in one place for a very short time.
___ 3. This statements refers to the mototcyclists more than the birds.
___ 4. Other _____

C. "One is always nearer by not keeping still."

___ 1. A person does not have to readily make a decision by constantly moving.

___ 2. A person is nearer to reaching a conclusion by always looking for answers to support that conclusion.

___ 3. Constant movement is better than momentarily reflecting on the situation surrounding a person.

___ 4. Movement always has a purpose.

___ 5. Other _____

IV. Which statements are reasonable conclusions about the motorcyclists and the birds? Indicate your choices with an X.

___ A. The birds seem to have a purpose in their movement.

___ B. The motorcyclists seem to come from nowhere and travel to nowhere.

___ C. The motorcyclists lack the instinct of the birds.

___ D. The motorcyclists appear to reach an absolute, an end, in which to rest.

___ E. Motorcyclists are symbolic of people keeping busy for the sake of movement.

___ F. People who ride motorcycles have no goal in life.

___ G. Other _____

V. Consider your responses in questions I-IV. Which statements appear to be reasonable conclusions? Place an X beside each statement to indicate your response.

___ A. People join groups related to their need for identity.

___ B. Once a group has satisfied a person's need, he looks for another group to join, abandoning the first group.

___ C. Constant motion is a means to finding an identification.

___ D. Motion is more desirable than stagnation.

___ E. Constant movement allows an escape from reality.

___ F. Today's generation is characterized by people involved in a great number of activities.

___ G. This poem can be related to life in our society today.

___ H. Other _____

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Experiencing a novel: The short and long of it

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Junior high English teachers frequently feel caught in the middle. Their students are making the transition from elementary to secondary grades, from childhood to adolescence, and from activity-centered to more academic classrooms. Often this feeling of being in between extends to concerns over how to approach the teaching of novels. For the past six decades (Appleby, 1974; Hook, 1979) English teachers have debated over the merits of intensive study of few works versus extensive, but more superficial, reading of many novels. In this article, we offer a strategy for capturing the best of both options: "quick reads" with rapid completion of a novel to encourage those students who have never finished a book before, coupled with detailed study of topical and thematic aspects of a book that can stand up to close inspection.

The Overall Plan

What we propose is that teachers use a combination of two approaches -- "Read a book in an hour" (Childrey, 1977, Smith, 1979) and curriculum webbing (Norton, 1982). Taken together, these two approaches to experiencing novels have many advantages. They allow for maximum participation among students. They provide a framework for integrated instruction in reading and writing, as well as other language skills. They allow for interdisciplinary study. They provide the framework for extended independent study or small group projects. Most importantly, they allow students not only to experience an entire novel in an hour (truly a "quick read") but also to deepen their understanding of the novel over a longer period of time.

But first a word about our novel. Due to the extended study component of this plan, the novel that is chosen must be worthwhile reading

for students and a defensible choice for teachers. Frequently these two criteria come in conflict. What students enjoy may not strike the teacher as good literature; the books that teachers feel are worthy of study may not appeal to students. We have discovered a book that should satisfy both groups, Virginia Hamilton's *Sweet Whispers, Brother Rush* (Avon Camelot paperback, 1983), and will use it for specific examples here.

This novel tells the story of a 15 year old girl, Tree (short for Teresa) who becomes infatuated with a handsome, well-dressed young man only to discover that he is the ghost of her mother's brother. Through a series of eerie appearances in Tree's "art room" (actually a small clothes closet in which she paints and draws) the revenant uncle takes Tree and her brother Dab on journeys into the past. Each journey reveals more about Tree's family history. The tension created by Brother Rush's revelations of the love, desperation, happiness, and tragedy in the family forges an emotional bond between book and reader. Since several chapters end with either gripping revelations or deepening mysteries, *Sweet Whispers*...is ideal for the discussion segment of "read a book in an hour."

Read a Book in an Hour

"Read a book in an hour" is an idea deceptive in its simplicity. We have adapted and expanded the basic idea of tearing a book into separate chapters, distributing the chapters one to a student for silent reading, and guiding a student-by-student retelling of the book (Childrey, 1977). The adapted, expanded procedure operates this way. First the teacher must reexamine and reread the novel with an eye toward breaking up the book into chunks of approximately equal length. For *Sweet Whispers*, this can be accomplished by chunking chapters 1-3 together, and from there on using two-chapter chunks. This will result in eight chunks, six of which range from 20 to 27 pages, with one chunk of 18 and one of 33 pages. Next the teacher divides the class into the number of groups for which there are sections of the book. Thus for a class of thirty there will be eight groups of 3-4 students. Third, multiple copies of the book must be available --enough so that each child in each group has a chunk of the book to read, with an extra copy or two available for chapter end pages at the end of chunks.

The fourth step may be the most important -- salesmanship. At this point the teacher has to generate some enthusiasm, pique the curiosity of students by announcing that they are going to participate in an experiment in speed reading. Students are told that the class will read (hold up the book) a novel in an hour. After fielding the expected wisecracks, complaints, and questions, the teacher groups students,

rips the books apart, and makes sure that each student within a group has the same chapters. The teacher next appoints a recorder and leader for each group. The role of the leader is to make sure that post-reading discussion is focused and includes contributions from each group member. The role of recorder is to note group comments on the chapters read. Step six is the actual reading. The teacher passes out a worksheet to each student (See Figure 1.) with an extra copy to the recorder. Approximately half the page should be reserved for the heading "Stuff Important Enough to Tell the Rest of the Class." The remaining half of the sheet should be divided equally under the headings "Speculations -- I think that immediately before this section..." and "Predictions -- I think that immediately after this section..." As students read individually, they note any aspects of the book they feel are important under the first section. The remaining two sections are primarily for the use of students who finish early within a group, or for groups within the class who finish early. Of course, for a teacher who wishes to spend more time on the book, this speculation and prediction can be a planned activity for everyone.

The seventh step involves discussion within each group regarding what is most important to report to the class as a whole. The group leader is responsible for guiding this discussion, and the recorder uses the extra worksheet to list the group's final decisions. (As is necessary in any short article, we are making assumptions that certain characteristics exist among the students involved in this lesson. First, we assume the students are fluent enough readers to grasp at least the literal message of what they read. Second, and perhaps a more tenuous assumption, we assume that students can work productively in groups. If this assumption is unfounded, we suggest that the teacher work directly with group discussion techniques before attempting the procedures we suggest. For instance, using "The 4 Stage Rocket" (Epstein, 1972) can be very helpful.)

The eighth and final step is the sharing of group summaries of the events of the book. Although "Read a book in an hour" is a catchy title, we recommend using two class periods since this book is relatively long. We've found, in fact, that we cannot "read a book in an hour" satisfactorily with secondary students unless it is no more than 125 pages. At this stage the teacher becomes the discussion leader and recorder, calling upon small group recorders to report what happened in the order in which the book was written. As the reports are filed with the class, the teacher charts the summary of the book for all to see on the chalkboard or large sheets of paper. Usually, during this phase students begin to see connections between their chapters and the chapters that are currently being reported. This often leads to revisions of what was considered important in earlier chapters and stimulates spontaneous discussion among groups who have read dif-

ferent material. If this discussion suggests that further examination of the book is warranted, the teacher may wish to extend "read a book in an hour."

Extension of Read a Book in an Hour

As Smith (1979) has noted, the whole class discussion can be geared toward an examination of selected aspects of the book. For instance, rather than recording in chunk-by-chunk fashion the "most important stuff" that each group found, the teacher might divide the chalkboard into the categories of plot, setting, character, and conflict for recording purposes. This could also be done as an analytic literary lesson after discussing the whole of the book. Smith has also noted ways "read a book in an hour" can be used in sentence combining. A third alternative involves having groups select a key passage as a "grabber" to entice the class to read a new chapter or the whole book (Thomas & Robinson, 1984). However the last phase is handled, it is most important that somewhere in the sequence students be allowed to participate in the reading of the novel in three ways: individual readings, small group discussion, and whole class discussion. Once students have this background, they will be prepared to participate in the next phase of study.

Webbing as a Teaching Tool

The concept of webbing is versatile. Strategies have been prepared for student use of webbing as response to literature (Rico, 1978) for students' evaluation of peers' creative writing (Schatteman, 1982), for student concept development in science (Stewart, 1979), for use in organization of expository prose (Barron, 1979), for teachers' use in curriculum planning (Norton, 1975, 1976). In this article, we are particularly interested in the use of webbing for curriculum planning by teachers and students.

Curriculum webs may be devised for at least four purposes. First, a web may be created reflecting the major elements of a novel (See Figure 2: Web I.). Second, more detailed webs may be created on a single element (for instance Figure 3: Web II on themes). Third, webs may be organized topically and thematically with suggestions attached to each topic or theme for extended reading (See Figure 4: Web III.). Finally, webs that suggest areas for interdisciplinary study may be created (See Figure 5: Web IV.). Please note that for ease of reproduction we have "webbed" in linear fashion rather than in the familiar spiderweb pattern most teachers recognize.

Applications of Webbing to *Sweet Whispers...*

In the webbing examples provided here, teachers have many options open to them. First, they can make decisions on how much time will

be spent in follow-up study of the central work and related materials. For instance, creating a web with students that is similar to Web I, (See Figure 2.) and discussing interrelationships among the elements of the novel can be accomplished in a relatively short period of time. Second, teachers can make decisions on what areas of *Sweet Whispers* receive major emphasis. If one or more aspects of the novel are considered to be of major importance to the book, or if they are important in the school's curriculum, the unit on *Sweet Whispers*...could be expanded by developing and working with webs like Web II. (See Figure 3.). A unit of medium length might be created by using "Read a book in an hour," (Web I, and Web II).

However, if ideas related to Webs III and IV (See Figures 4 & 5.) are used, teachers have the opportunity for developing a much more extensive unit. For instance, by using suggestions developed for Web III, students can select new works to read independently or in small groups, on themes of personal interest, yet related to themes in the central work. Follow-up discussions will provide the opportunity for all students to contribute to a discussion of the many themes in *Sweet Whispers* since everyone is reading different books.

The use of Web IV provides another opportunity for differentiated assignments. We have suggested activities in several disciplines, all of which rely on writing, to indicate the range of subjects that might be explored. (Of course, many activities other than those involving writing might be used.) Thus, by using ideas related to Web III and IV, teachers' options include decisions on degree of interdisciplinary study, the amount of emphasis to place on language skills, and the value to be placed on extended wide reading.

The webs that teachers create alone can be time consuming. However, a publication called *The Web* from The Ohio State University, is issued quarterly and contains many webs on notable children's and adolescents' books. Teachers who try the approach we have suggested here and find it worthwhile will undoubtedly find *The Web* a valuable resource.

Conclusion

In the previous pages we have suggested one way in which teachers might split the horns of a continuing dilemma - how to resolve the conflicts between intensive and extensive reading. Both students and teachers can have the best of both worlds - a quick and pleasureable experience in reading a book under nonthreatening conditions, and a deep and reflective immersion in the more subtle textures of a good book. With "Read a book in an hour" and curriculum webbing used as mutually supportive activities, teachers can provide both satisfying and substantive learning activities for their students.

Figure 1
READ A BOOK IN AN HOUR

SMALL GROUP WORKSHEET

STUFF IMPORTANT ENOUGH TO TELL THE REST OF THE CLASS

SPECULATIONS: I THINK THAT IMMEDIATELY BEFORE THIS SECTION...

PREDICTIONS: I THINK THAT IMMEDIATELY AFTER THIS SECTION...

Figure 2

Web I: Aspects of the Novel

Plot - self against self - Tree's own curiosity about her past - family, roots

Tune in Yesterday, T. Ernesto Bethancourt, N.Y. Bantam, 1981.

Character - Tree - protogonist - Brother Rush - the archetypal older person who befriends & teaches the young protagonists

Jazz Country, Nat. dent off. N.Y., Dell, 1965.

Setting - present - with flashbacks (integral as opposed to *back-drop) Tune in Yesterday*

Theme - *Despair* - over the lack of control of her own Dabney life as well as Dabney's. *Social alienation* or isolation because of the demands made on her by her mother and Dabney

The Executioner, Jay Bennett, N.Y., Avon, 1982.

Tone or mood - somberness

Morning is a long time coming, Bette Green, N.Y., Pocket Books (Simon & Schuster) 1978.

Mode - tragedy - *On Fire,* Ouida Sebestyan, Boston, Atlantic Monthly Press, 1985.

Point-of-View - 3rd person
The Executioner and *On Fire*

Figure 3

Web II: Themes within *Sweet Whispers*

An example of one theme - The importance of family - How family often controls or directs the protagonist's life

Relationship with parents or stepparents
The Divorce Express 1982 - Delacorte, N.Y., Paula Danziger
The Pistaschio Prescription, 1978 - Laurel Leaf, N.Y.

Relationship with siblings
The Outsiders, S.E. Henton, N.Y., Laurel Leaf, 1967.

Family tragedies - *Ordinary People,* Judith Guest, N.Y. Ballentine, 1976.

Being responsible for siblings' care or survival
Homecoming, Cynthia Voight, N.Y., Atheneum, 1981.
Dicey's Song, Cynthia Voight, N.Y., Atheneum. 1982.

Being isolated from peers due to family situation
I Am the Cheese, Robert Cormier, N.Y., Dell, 1977.

Absentee parent
The Planet of Junior Brown, Virginia Hamilton, N.Y., MacMillan, 1971.

Figure 4

Web III: Related Literature

Incurable illness, *A Summer to Die,* Lois Lowrey, N.Y., Bantam, 1977.

Sibling with learning problems, *Summer of the Swans,* Betsy Byar, N.Y., Scholastic, 1970.

Protagonist with strength & fortitude to see the problem through: *The Soul Brothers and Sister Lou,* Kristen Hunter, N.Y., Avon, 1968.

Death of a Peer: *About David,* Susan Beth Pfeffer, N.Y., Dell, 1980.

The Supernatural: *Haunted,* Judith St. George or *Stranger with My Face,* Lois Duncan, N.Y., Dell, 1981.

Absent Parent: *Notes for Another Life,* N.Y., Bantam, 1982.

Relationship with a step-parent (or a prospective step-parent). *Mom, the Wolfman and Me,* Norma Klein, N.Y., Pantheon, 1972.

Seeking roots: *Find A Stranger, Say Goodbye,* Lois Lowry, N.Y., Pocket Books (Simon & Schuster) 1978.

Figure 5

Web IV: Interdisciplinary

In depth writing and research can be done on any of the following:

Music - 1. jazz music
2. music of 20 years ago vs. today's music

Family Life - 1. one parent family
2. latch key children
3. step-parents
4. sibling rivalry
5. genealogy and oral history

Art - 1. Did Tree's family value her artistic talent?
2. discussion of ethnic art & artists
3. black arts movement in United States

Sports - 1. Why are "pro" sports so important to this story?
2. role of baseball in American life

Ethnic Culture - 1. Black American culture:
food/dress/hobbies/interests
2. What is valued by specific cultures,
in specific cultures, in specific regions?

Geography - 1. the Ohio Valley region
2. Cincinnati
3. rural vs. urban

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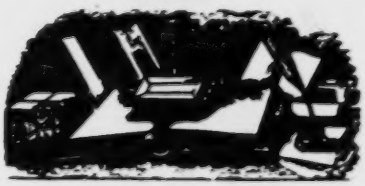

Literacy through literature: Improving on the basal

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Many recent articles and studies have focused our attention on problems in the instruction of reading comprehension. Based on his experiences in working with practitioners and supported by examination of national assessment results, Pearson (1985) concluded that we are doing well teaching reading in the primary grades but that from the third grade into high school, there is a gradual slide in reading scores relative to national norms. His judgment is that while we are doing a good job with the decoding skills characteristic of the primary grades, we do a mediocre job of teaching the comprehension skills at the intermediate and upper levels. The fact may be that we do not teach them at all. Durkin's (1978-79) well-known study of comprehension instruction noted only 45 minutes of instruction in comprehension in 17,997 minutes of classroom observation. One cannot deny that a problem exists in the teaching of reading comprehension. The immediate concern is to identify precisely the nature and cause of the problem.

The basal reading program and accompanying instructional materials along with teacher practices in using them have been criticized in relation to comprehension instruction. In a study of basal reading program teachers' manuals, Durkin (1981) found mostly literal level story questions in search of single correct answers. She labeled this questioning approach as assessment of comprehension rather than comprehension instruction since its primary goal was to determine whether the children remembered what had been read, not to help them understand as they read. Beck (1979) found that basal manuals fail to form a line of questions to lead children through the main events of a story. Finally, Durkin (1984), in a study of how teachers use basal manuals, found that while basal manuals do provide background information, prereading questions, and during-reading questions, teachers use primarily the after-reading questions with the purpose of assessing comprehension.

Another aspect of reading instruction under criticism is the skill-

oriented nature of many programs. Fisher (1978) found that students spend up to 70% of the time allocated for reading instruction in independent practice, or seatwork. The demand for worksheets seems to be insatiable. Yet Osborn (1984) pointed out that analysis of workbook activities reveals that many of them require only a perfunctory level of reading. More than a decade ago, Niles (1972) precociously commented on the trend toward skill-based reading programs that, "Teachers could find themselves producing readers who can divide words into syllables with great accuracy or analyze a piece of writing for its main idea but who cannot read in any great and important sense." Comprehension is the great and important sense of reading.

Perhaps it is the nature of the basal reading books themselves that is the problem. Chall (1983) proposed that children entering what she called Stage 3 (grade 4 level for most students) first encounter reading as a task that exceeds the bounds of the oral language background which has served and sufficed through the primary grades. Students move, at this point, into the literary tradition with content and vocabulary beyond what they know and come into contact with even more complex, literary, abstract, and technical reading materials. The fact that science and social studies programs at this level become individual disciplines separate from the larger language arts program of the primary grades supports this idea. The child begins to read to learn in the content areas while he continues to learn to read in a content area classroom where the teacher recognizes the dual role of instruction at this level. One wonders whether this dual role exists in the reading instructional program where it would seem that literature would appropriately be ensconced.

An interesting study of 1959 selections in 34 basal textbooks from eight publishing companies reported in *The Reading Teacher* (1984) attempted to identify three types of content in the basal stories. The three were: subject matter - knowledge of facts content; functional - knowledge of how to do content; and ethos - knowledge of the right action content. Of the selections surveyed, 42.3% had no subject matter content, 70.9% had no functional content, and 87.7% had no ethos content. The study concluded that, "One can't, after all, use a text to teach reading comprehension that doesn't have much in it to comprehend." There does exist a wealth of children's literature which superbly addresses each of these areas of content. Either publishers of basal programs have chosen to ignore it, or the nature of the construction of the basal reader precludes its inclusion.

In his national best-selling biography of General Custer, Evan S. Connell (1984) quoted the reflections of a Mrs. Josiah Kelly. While held captive by the Blackfeet Indians, she received news that her in-

fant daughter had been found dead, pierced by three arrows and scalped. She wrote:

> Surely He who numbers the sparrows and feeds the ravens was not unmindful of her in that awful hour, but allowed the heavenly kingdom, to which her trembling soul was about to take its flight, to sweeten, with a glimpse of its beatific glory, the bitterness of death, even as the martyr Stephen, seeing the bliss above, could not be conscious of the torture below.

Connell added that Mrs. Kelly wrote "with a prose style whose complexity indicated a much higher level of public education in those days." It is enlightening to examine the content of reading texts of an earlier era. *McGuffey's Fifth Eclectic Reader* of 1896 included selections by Goldsmith, Alcott, Irving, Lowell, Thoreau, Shakespeare, as well as Biblical passages. The *Brooks's Readers Fifth Year* of 1906 contained passages from Spyri, Dickinson, Holmes, Wordsworth, Tolstoi, as well as Whittier, Longfellow, and Hawthorne. The *Bolenius Fifth Reader* in 1926 provided exposure to Tennyson, Thackeray, Dickens, Aristophanes, and entire sections devoted to the works of Whittier, Longfellow, Hawthorne, and Bryant. This is not to suggest that these authors are entirely excluded from current basal readers or that they should be included to the exclusion of worthy contemporary writers. Rather, it is to point out that while recognizing the didactic nature of many of the selections and the pedagogical purposes they were selected to serve, children in "those days" learned to read with literature.

The problem in comprehension in the intermediate grades could lie in the design of the basal program itself. It would seem that the more strident the demands for the construction of a reading text within the established bounds of readability become, the less appropriate works of literature become for reading text selections. They simply do not fit. Accompanying this has been the overwhelming emphasis on the skills of reading taught frequently as workbook activities not always in relation to a basal selection. Huck (1979) observed several reading classes in an alternative school. She found students working on reading---the skills of reading--ditto sheets containing lists of words that had to be matched with endings, and short paragraphs with questions requiring the student to complete the blanks. Having found the school library rarely used, she concluded, "Obviously no one ever finished the task of learning how to read in order to have time to enjoy reading." She further added, "We don't achieve literacy and then give children literature, we achieve literacy *through* literature."

Works of children's literature can have an integral place in the reading program that transcends the offerings of the basal and those choice treasures shared with the children through the teacher's reading

aloud. There are books, classics of the genre, which should be read together both because they are indispensible to the development of the literate person and because children must be *taught* how to read them. We speak of problems in comprehension instruction. Perhaps we are not using the right vehicles to teach comprehension.

Many current ideas concerning comprehension instruction focus around a dynamic interplay of the reader's background knowledge, the text to be read, the purposes for reading, and the resulting strategic approach used by the reader in this interplay as a result of his reading instruction. This interplay does not just happen, it must be taught. Reading skills are of little value unless they become a part of a larger strategy used by the reader as he encounters their need in any reading task requiring them. This transfer must be actively sought as the ultimate goal of reading instruction. Here then is the first reason to use works of children's literature as instructional materials in the reading program. Providing a copy of a children's book to each pupil in a classroom, abandoning the basal reader for a week or two, and reading together establishes the important connection that what reading class is really all about is *reading books.*

In an equally significant sense, reading a children's book together in reading class allows the opportunity for instruction in strategies for reading books. As children enter the intermediate grades, the books written for them become longer and more complex. There is a definite need for instruction on how to deal with the increasing length and complexity of this literature. So often, children check out books from the library, keep them for a week or two, and return them having read only a few pages at the beginning. This could be because no one has ever shown them how to deal with the book length selection. Sixth grade students encountering Lloyd Alexander's *The Black Cauldron* are completely baffled by the plethora of strangely named characters in the first chapters. Without instruction concerning a strategy to deal with this problem, many would give up and miss a wonderful piece of children's literature. With instructional help in devising a strategy to keep a brief list of characters and with the understanding that each character will develop an identity through Alexander's superbly written fantasy, this obstacle is surmounted.

There are many things that authors do in books that children must understand in order for comprehension to occur, things that cannot be taught satisfactorily in the short selections of a basal reader. Children reading Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* must recognize the author's use of flashback in order to comprehend the second stage in which Scrooge visits his past. Understanding the flashback is critical to the comprehension of the larger story structure and allows a fascinating discussion of story versus chronological sequencing. Children must be taught that authors cannot tell two stories

simultaneously and thus must use the flashback when a story bifurcates as in Twain's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* when Tom and Becky are lost in the cave and Huck Finn saves the Widow Douglas. Students must be taught that books are chronicles of problems or conflicts involving internal and external forces which must be resolved by the characters. Comprehension of a book like Sterling North's *Rascal* requires an understanding of the elemental conflict between Sterling and nature for the significance of the author's message to be appreciated. Esther Forbes's *Johnny Tremain* sets the internal conflicts of a boy of eighteenth century Boston within the context of the American-British conflict leading to Lexington and Concord. Comprehension of the work depends on the recognition of this parallel structure. Children cannot be expected to understand what authors do in writing books without instruction; instruction cannot occur unless children are taught using the books that the authors write.

Much has been written concerning the importance of background knowledge in reading comprehension. The reader's background knowledge is a vital factor in the comprehension process as he evaluates what he is reading in relation to what he already knows and augments his background knowledge by virtue of his comprehension. Children must be taught to use their background knowledge while reading - they do not use it automatically. While the basal program manual may provide background information for the teacher to share and suggestions to elicit further information from the students, the teacher may neglect to do this as mentioned above. Additionally, as the basal text is written for so wide an audience, the relationship between pupil and background can only be minimal at best. The judicious teacher can use children's literature to provide the appropriate fit and instruct his pupils in strategies to utilize background knowledge to enhance comprehension. Fifth graders in Wisconsin typically study the history of our nation in social studies. Thus, background knowledge concerning the American Civil War is a known student commodity to the sixth grade teacher selecting Ann Petry's superb biography, *Harriet Tubman: Conductor on the Underground Railroad* as a text for reading instruction. Conscious instructional effort draws the child's background knowledge to the text, modeling the process, allowing the students to see the strategy in action and to benefit in their comprehension by its use. Similarly, Forbes's *Johnny Tremain* can be chosen for sixth graders familiar with the colonial unrest leading to the American Revolution. Because Forbes was a noted authority on colonial Boston, her work, although historical fiction, can withstand intense historical scrutiny and provide excellent lessons in evaluative reading. For fifth graders, Brink's *Caddie Woodlawn* could be chosen to capitalize on knowledge of Wisconsin's history and allow instruction in this valuable strategy. There are

wonderful works of children's literature to fit the scope of every child's background knowledge which, when chosen, can be admirably used to provide instruction in this important area of reading comprehension.

Children must learn to recognize and set purposes for reading and utilize strategies appropriate to the nature of the reading task. The failure of the basal program to foster the recognition and establishment of purposes for reading may result from the intensity and unanimity of the focus of the reading lessons on skill instruction. Each selection is so thoroughly analyzed that children may never recognize the pleasures and sources of information that reading can and should exemplify. Using works of children's literature can surmount this difficulty and foster the strategies necessary for children to distinguish and set purposes and gauge their approach accordingly. A book is, by its nature, designed to enable the child to learn to set purposes on his own because of the continuity and length of the story. In teaching children to set purposes, the teacher or the teacher and students together. After reading a chapter or two, the students can be instructed in strategies on how to analyze where the story is going, propose questions that need answers, speculate on the questions, and then proceed with the author's version. Ellen Raskin's *The Westing Game* is a clever puzzle mystery with unanswered questions oozing from its fabric. As such, it is an ideal selection to provide instruction in the area of setting purposes. Natalie Babbitt's *Tuck Everlasting* is written quite mysteriously so readers frequently feel some ominous event forthcoming. It also is useful in providing instruction in the setting of reading purposes.

There is another aspect to purposes for reading, that of recognizing the complexity of the text, deciding what must be derived from it, and modifying the reading approach and strategies to accomodate those needs. Children's literature can provide excellent instructional lessons and learning experiences for this task and get children into books where they will have to use them. Because the book the child is reading has not been sterilized with a readability formula, he will encounter the language as it is. Twain wrote a delightful chapter in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* entitled 'Eloquence and the Master's Gilded Dome.' In the chapter, the school children offer their end-of-the-year recitations and compositions for their parents at a school convocation. Twain intentionally provided the most florid and impenetrable prose in his version of these compositions written in the style of the time. Contemporary children are surprised when their teacher explains to them that these passages are almost impossible to understand, that one reads them to get a feeling of what was once considered the height of refinement and elegance, and that the author put them into the book for effect more than for meaning. The idea that you could pass over them unconcerned about meaning is one that must be taught.

Similarly, in a work like Dicken's *A Christmas Carol* the archaic vocabulary poses a formidable reading text. Children need to be instructed that they may have to reread sentences, slow down their reading rate, and determine if comprehension of the sentence and passage can be maintained without the meaning of the unknown word or phrase. Again, the children are surprised to learn that they may skip the unknown word provided comprehension is maintained. On the other hand, when comprehension fails, vocabulary strategies must be applied. Stevenson's *Treasure Island* provides a good opportunity for children to adjust their rate and reread, often aloud, the passages of Long John Silver's pirate jargon. To reiterate, children cannot learn to monitor and adjust their reading in texts that are so carefully written that all potential problems are eliminated. Books can be and are difficult, confusing, and complex.

What about skill instruction? Where do children learn the word attack, comprehension, and study skills currently so large a part of the reading program? First of all, it is not the purpose of this article to advocate the abandonment of basal reading programs - they do have an important place in the reading classroom. Rather, it is hoped that schools would see fit to set the basal aside several times a year and select a work of children's literature to use as a reading text. Secondly, there is no reason that a skillful teacher cannot use children's books to teach the same skills. A most revealing and disturbing comment was made to this author by a sixth grade student during the reading of *Rascal.* The students were reviewing syllabication rules as a means of attacking unknown words. A list of unknown multi-syllabic words from *Rascal* was on the chalkboard. After reviewing the rules, the students were asked to divide the words into syllables preliminary to pronouncing them. A student raised her hand and asked, "Mr. Higgins, how do you expect us to divide the words into syllables if we don't know how to say them to begin with?" This student had knowledge of a skill, but this knowledge was obviously not a part of her word attack strategies. Teaching children reading skills in conjunction with a work of children's literature can be an effective means of transforming skills into strategies. Children frequently learn about indexes and tables of contents in intermediate reading lessons. Usually, the lesson is a workbook page containing a fictitious index or table of contents followed by questions about it. How much more realistic and valuable is a lesson drawn from a book like Petry's *Harriet Tubman: Conductor on the Underground Railroad,* a book that has an index where children can actually refer to the page and use the index to locate information as it was designed to be used. Similarly, it seems more realistic to use the dictionary for locating word meanings than to depend solely on a glossary at the back of a book. Most books in the library do not have glossaries after all. One should look upon the

reading of the children's book as an opportunity to breathe life into the skills of reading, to place them into the array of strategies at the child's disposal.

And children's literature in the reading program can do so much more. Children come to know the classics, works of Dickens, Twain, Stevenson, Alcott, and Kipling. They enter the worlds of fantasy, mystery and mythology. History and biography make the past come alive. Children enter the world of literature while they learn to read. Hirsch (1983) suggested as a result of a study designed to determine whether the quality of writing affected a reader's comprehension, that more important than the quality of writing was the reader's background knowledge, specifically what he has read before. It is stated in *Becoming a Nation of Readers* (1985): "For each age there are fables, fairy tales, folk tales, classic and modern works of fiction and nonfiction that embody the core of our cultural heritage. A person of that age cannot be considered literate until he or she has read, understood and appreciated these works."

It seems then that using children's literature in the reading program will not only improve students' reading abilities by virtue of their use as instructional materials, but the very fact that children have read outstanding works of literature will increase the background knowledge indispensible to further comprehension. We can indeed achieve *literacy through literature.*

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Get Involved!

'Reading Is For Everyone'

Toto, I Don't Think We're In Workbooks Anymore

Somewhere, beyond workbooks,
readers are romantic,
rowdy and reeling,
Goofing and gasping
reacting to feeling
Somewhere,
literally,
readers are having a literary love affair
with language
and books.

Somewhere
subjective and silent,
stories and poems are read with inferential intrepidity
and thoughtful reflection.
Somewhere
readers are free from BASIC SKILL OVERKILL,
textbook trivia,
and worksheet subjection.
(Fill in the blanks - no thanks)

Somewhere, over the rainbow,
metacognitional MASSAGES relieve tensions,
and creativity sings
as critical reading brings
a cure
to the context clues blues.

Somewhere,
literature generates inspiration
and dreaming.
Somewhere,
readers' responses transcend testing programs
and management scheming.
Because
Somewhere, during Sustained Silent Reading,
red lights are not allowed
on yellow brick roads.

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Exceptional needs students deserve literature too

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Books play an important role in every curriculum including Special Education. Yet the use of literature with students identified as having exceptional educational needs is often overlooked. We tend to emphasize individual skills listed on annual IEP forms and lose focus of the larger goals we have for our students. Certainly a love of, and an appreciation for, the written word is one of those larger long-range goals. Instilling that love of literature in each of my students became one of my goals for this school year.

My program is called SNDS (Special Needs - Disabled Students) but is actually more like the old "special room" concept of years past. Children of various ages and handicapping conditions are placed in one room with one teacher. On paper my students are labelled as emotionally disturbed, learning disabled, and educably mentally retarded. They are enrolled in kindergarten through sixth grade. Most of them have repeated one grade. They have been around and have seen all the new techniques. They don't like most of what they've seen, and they really don't like reading. Therein lies my challenge.

To me reading means sharing bread and jam with Frances, laughing at Winnie-the-Pooh's innocence, and realizing that I'm not the only one who has terrible, horrible, no good, very bad days. To my students reading means one hour each morning consisting of a book, workbook, and various dittoed pages. While I long to share the Velveteen Rabbit's concept of what is *Real* with them, they think only of how to get this page done as quickly and painlessly as possible. To compound the issue, many of my students live in homes with minimal reading materials or experiences. Their parents may themselves have difficulty reading and often do not subscribe to newspapers or magazines.

After listening to my students read the library books I gave them, I understood why it wasn't exciting. Reading at a snail's pace and mis-

pronouncing or repeating words is hardly conducive to unlocking the pleasures of literature. Obviously I would need to read to them.

I started in a haphazard fashion and my results were also haphazard. Whenever we had time left over, I read to the students. In spite of my best intentions, we rarely found the time for literature. Students are in my room between twenty minutes and th[illegible]-and-one-half hours a day. The clock becomes an integral part of our program as the students and I make sure they get back to the regular classroom on time. I read parts of books whenever there was time, and my students often forgot the characters and lost the storyline between readings. It appeared that I was exposing them to more frustration rather than making reading a pleasurable experience. A change needed to be made.

To begin with I made a commitment that literature would be an integral part of each student's curriculum. Because IEPs demand an accountability for every part of a student's program, I justified the inclusion of literature on the following points:

a) An enjoyment of and appreciation for the written word is a long range goal for each of my students. What better way to do this than to expose them to some of the best children's literature ever written?

b) Poor readers need to hear good reading models.

c) A wide variety of readings will expose my students to vocabulary and experiences, broadening their own language abilities. This will have positive carry-over in many other subject areas.

d) Literature adds to basic knowledge. I want my students to be familiar with the names of Mark Twain, Dr. Seus, etc., when references are made to them in school, on the news, and even in *Trivial Pursuit*.

e) Some of the books which are now above their reading levels may later be assigned reading in English classes. The exposure now will enhance their success later.

f) My final rationale was simply that this was something fun for my students and me. Having faced so much failure in the past, I thought it was important for them to know that school can be fun too.

Having made a commitment to literature, I then scheduled time in each day to read. This was written in each student's instructional plan, prominently posted on my desk, and shared with the students. I only had to tell them once--they reminded me after that. While scheduling I

made sure that every student had at least one exposure per week, with most students being read to daily. Reading times varied from five to ten minutes. One area of the room was set aside for readings.

The next step in my planning was to select "quality literature." I began with my favorite books--ones I had enjoyed as a child and enjoyed reading now. Then I acquired several literature anthologies. This was especially helpful as it introduced me to many new authors. Next I consulted with the IMC director in our school. I also stayed in touch with my students' interests in particular subjects and enjoyment of certain authors. A partial list of our favorite readings follows this article.

The next job was to start reading and to stick with it. I found this very easy to do. My students and I looked forward to these special breaks during the day. Often I had five or six different books going at once, each matched to the interest and maturity level of various groups.

Immediate rewards included:

a) a very intimate sharing time with my students,
b) the enjoyment of the students,
c) an increased vocabulary for each student (Words were frequently defined and used in other settings during the day),
d) an appreciation for particular authors--even my youngest student can identify a couple of authors by name,
e) a knowledge of various illustrating techniques,
f) the increased ability to picture a story when no illustrations are provided, and
g) a frequent practice of various reading skills including identifying characters, recalling sequence, predicting outcomes, reading with emotion, and retelling stories.

Best of all, my students are seeking out these books on their own when they are in the IMC. They are proudly reading them to parents, teachers, and other students. They combine their word recognition and decoding skills with previous knowledge of the book while reading. The results are not always 100% accuracy, but there is more fluent oral reading.

They are excited about the books they've heard, frequently requesting to hear particular ones again. They watch TV shows based on the books. They make comparisons between a book and something talked about in another subject area.

I have concluded that my instincts were right. Good literature does have a place in every classroom. I would highly recommend that every teacher carefully consider adding literature to his/her daily schedule.

Following is a list of some of the books most enjoyed by my students. This is intended only as a place to start and is by no means all inclusive. In fact we are adding to this list weekly, as we are exposed to new books and new students enter my program.

Anderson, Hans Christian, *The Emperor's New Clothes*
Anderson, Hans Christian, *The Ugly Duckling*
Baum, L. Frank, *The Wizard of Oz*
Bemelmans, Ludwig, *Madeline's Rescue*
Blume, Judy, *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing*
Bridwell, Norman, *Clifford's Good Deeds*
Brown, Margaret Wise, *Goodnight Moon*
Burton, Virginia Lee, *The Little House*
Cleary, Beverly, *Henry and the Paper Route*
Cleary, Beverly, *Ramona Forever*
DeLaMare, Walter, *Peacock Pie*
Flack, Marjorie and Wiese, Durt, *The Story About Ping*
Fatio, Louise, *The Happy Lion*
Greene, Constance C., *Isabelle the Itch*
Hoban, Russell, *Best Friends for Frances*
Hoban, Russell, *Bread and Jam for Frances*
Kipling, Rudyard, *Rikki-Tikki-Tavi*
Kumin, Maxine W., *Paul Bunyan*
Leaf, Munro, *The Store of Ferdinand*
Lionni, Leo, *Frederick*
McCloskey, Robert, *Blueberries For Sal*
McCloskey, Robert, *Make Way For Ducklings*
Milne, A.A., *Winnie-the-Pooh*
Potter, Beatrix, *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*
Rawls, Wilson, *Summer of the Monkeys*
Rawls, Wilson, *Where the Red Fern Grows*
Rey, H.A., *Curious George*
Rey, H.A., *Curious George Takes a Job*
Sendak, Maurice, *Where the Wild Things Are*
Seuss, Dr., *Horton Hears a Who*
Seuss, Dr., *The Cat in the Hat*
Silverstein, Shel, *A Light in the Attic*
Slobodkina, Esphyr, *Caps for Sale*
Thomas, Patricia, *"Stand Back," Said the Elephant, "I'm Going to Sneeze"*
Viorst, Judith, *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*
Wilder, Laura Ingalls, *Little House in the Big Woods*
Wilder, Laura Ingalls, *Little House on the Prairie*
Williams, Margery, *The Velveteen Rabbit*
Yashima, Taro, *Crow Boy*
Zinnik, Reiner, *The Bear on the Motorcycle*

Children's books related to computers

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The field of children's literature often reflects the culture and events of the time. The extensive impact of computers in our culture is evident through the many books written for children in the elementary grades which have computers central to their content.

Teachers know that children will more readily read things in which they are interested. Computers are definitely an area of high interest for children at present. If such books were available, children would undoubtedly be eager to read them. While computers are used in schools to help children to read (as well as for other purposes), children can also learn about computers through reading. This provides an excellent opportunity to give children practice in reading, using meaningful materials.

Because the field of computers and high technology is expanding so rapidly, a book's copyright date is significant. In those cases where information is somewhat outdated, the book can still be used if the teacher helps students to identify which parts are still accurate and which information has now been updated or changed, thus learning about the historical development of computers. This provides students with an opportunity to apply critical comprehension skills. A source should not be discarded completely until its content has been examined to select that which is still usable.

As I have read children's books about computers, they seem to fall into three main categories: computer literacy, programming, and fiction. Selected books in each category are reviewed below although many more are available. A more complete bibliography may be obtained from the author. Teachers should continue to watch for other books as they are published and make use of them in the classroom. It is important to recognize that not all books are good. Teachers need to read them before using them with children to decide if they agree with the content as presented.

These sources could be read by individual students who want to learn about computers or could be used by teachers to plan lessons for an entire class. It would also be a good idea to have several of these books in a reference section of a classroom library to answer questions that may arise.

For the purpose of this listing, "computer literacy" is defined to include historical development of computers and robots, how computers work, terminology, the binary system, general information about programming and languages, applications of computers in today's world, computer-related careers, and predictions of computer use in the future.

Billard, Mary. *All About Robots.* New York: Platt & Munk, 1982.
This is a well-written book including easily understood information and many colorful pictures. It includes the history of robots; robots and how they are used in industry, research, space, films, and the home; and speculation about robots in the future. The readability level is approximately fourth grade.

Brown, Christopher (Ed.) *Mr. Byte Presents a Kid's Book About Computers.* Yellow Springs, OH: Antioch Publishing Co., 1983.
This is one of a series of Mr. Byte books. Others include ***Computer Games, Computers in Space, Computers in Sports, Computer Art,*** and ***Computers and Robots.*** These are easy to understand books, explaining the use of computers in various applications. Colorful and attractive pictures help to clarify the content. Each book has a different set of stickers, relevant to the particular book. Each book also gives one program which is ready to type into the computer, and relevant to the topic of the book. The readability level is approximately fourth grade.

D'Ignazio, Fred. *The Star Wars Question and Answer Book About Computers.* New York: Random House, 1983.
This factual book covers topics such as the inside of a computer, computer games, history of computers, modern computers, programming, use of computers in making movies, robots, uses of computers in daily life, and computers of the future. Material is presented in an interesting way in small segments, with frequent subheadings and many meaningful pictures. The only use of the *Star Wars* theme is as an attention getter in the title, plus a few pictures of R2-D2 and C-3P0 scattered throughout the book. The information given is much broader than *Star Wars.* This is an excellent source, presented attractively. The readability level is approximately fifth grade.

Spencer, Donald D. *Famous People of Computing*. Ormond Beach, FL: Camelot Publishing Co., 1982.

The pages in this book are tear-out posters of people who have made significant contributions in the field of computers. There is a large portrait drawing on each page, with a brief paragraph at the bottom telling for what this person is known. The book is intended to provide historical information about computer development. It is suggested that students select a poster and research about that person thoroughly. The readability level is approximately fifth grade.

Programming

These books are best used by individual students at the time they have an opportunity to work at a computer, to make immediate application of the content. They are not books to just read through and would be difficult to follow unless ideas could be tried out on a computer.

Carlson, Edward. *Kids and the Apple*. Reston, VA: Reston Publishing Co., 1982.

This is a text for teaching programming. Books are available for several different brands of computers (Specify brand when ordering.). Commands and processes are taught in a clear, understandable way. Exercises would be interesting to students. It is intended for use by students seventh grade or above, but would be a good reference for teachers working with elementary children.

Larsen, Sally G. *Computers for Kids*. Morristown, NJ: Creative Computing Press, 1981.

This is a clearly-written book to teach programming in BASIC. Explanations are easy to understand. Sample programs demonstrate use of commands. "Notes for Parents and Teachers" provides additional information at the end of the text. The book is published for different computer brands, so specify brand desired when ordering. The readability level is approximately foruth grade.

Van Horn, Royal. *Computer Programming for Kids and Other Beginners*. Austin, TX: Sterling Swift Publishing Co., 1982.

This is an excellent source for teaching programming in BASIC. Explanations are complete, going step-by-step, pointing out things to be especially careful about. Interesting sample programs exemplify commands. It goes into more advanced programming than some programming books for children do, yet the procedures are presented clearly. Additional information is given for parents and teachers. The readability level is approximately third grade.

Fiction

This is a most intriguing area. Computers and high technology invite interpretation from a fictional standpoint. Fantasy and/or science fiction frequently are written to explain what we do not know as factual. Stories once written as science fiction may be now partially or totally real life. Again, the copyright date is most significant. Such writing would invite critical thinking by students to determine which parts are true and which ones are still based on speculation. Some books may also serve as stimuli for creative writing, following discussions about what life may be like in the future.

Bishop, Ann. ***Hello, Mr. Chips! Computer Jokes & Riddles.*** **New York: E.P. Dutton, 1982.**

The riddles and jokes in this book require some knowledge and experience with computers in order to understand the play on words and the situations implied. It is an interesting book, applying knowledge of computer terminology in a novel way. The riddles and jokes are written all in capitals. The readability level is about fourth grade, but understanding level may be higher.

Byars, Betsy. ***The Computer Nut.*** **New York: Viking, 1984.**

While working on her dad's computer at the office, Kate receives a message. It is from an alien, but Kate at first thinks it is sent by computer from a boy she knows. The adventures the children get into while trying to figure out who is sending the messages make an exciting, and at times hilarious, story. The readability level is approximately sixth grade.

Dank, Milton and Gloria. ***The Computer Caper.*** **New York: Delacorte Press, 1983.**

A gang of intermediate grade students put their talents together to bug a computer in an office. They want to find out a thief's password and examine his dealings using their school terminal, which happens to be hooked into the same mainframe computer, in order to help get the money back that the thief swindled from a friend's father. Everything turns out all right in the end, but the children have some real adventures in the process. Although the story is intriguing and moves quickly to keep the reader's attention, one might question the advisability of having children read such a book and perhaps get the idea of stealing information from computers. The readability level is approximately fifth grade.

D'Ignazio, Fred. ***Katie and the Computer.*** **Morristown, NJ: Creative Computing Press, 1979.**

A girl falls through a television screen into a computer and sees all the "people" working inside the various parts of the com-

puter to produce a flower for her, which will be displayed on the screen. Although the books is obviously fiction, the use of persons and common environmental surroundings could be misleading to a child trying to understand how a computer works. The flyleaves of the book present factual information about a computer, covering basically the same material included in the fictional account. It is hoped that this will teach the child the appropriate information. The readability level is approximaely third grade.

Keller, Charles. ***Ohm on the Range: Robot and Computer Jokes.*** **Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1982.**

The jokes in this book are about computers and robots. Some of them are of the same style as elephant or pickle jokes of the past. Children would really enjoy reading this book and sharing the jokes with their friends. Black and white pictures scattered throughout the book add a lot of interest. The format is attractive, with much open background to set off the jokes. Some experience with and knowledge about computers would be necessary to get the fun from the book. The readability level is approximately upper third or fourth grade.

Levy, Elizabeth. ***The Computer That Said Steal Me.*** **New York: Four Winds Press, 1983.**

Although the title of this book implies it would be about computers, in fact, that is a minor part of its plot. The story involves a group of intermediate grade children and their activities, relationships, and concerns. Family background, money, stealing, and nuclear war are the major themes dealt with in the story. The chess computer is the object stolen but is important to the plot only for that purpose. The story is an excellent, fast-moving one that holds the reader's attention throughout while teaching some important lessons. The readability level is approximately fifth grade.

MacGregor, Ellen and Pantell, Dora. ***Miss Pickerell Meets Mr. H.U.M.*** **New York: McGraw Hill, 1974.**

This story describes a culture about to be overtaken by computers. People are told what to do and they do it -- all except Miss Pickerell and some family and close friends, who manage to find the source of the head computer and make some changes to save the people. It is a really interesting story, and especially impressive considering the date of publication. A great deal of insight is evident about what might happen if computers are not controlled by caring people. The readability level is approximately fourth grade.

Slote, Alfred. ***C.O.L.A.R.*** **New York: Avon Books, 1981.** ***My Robot Buddy.*** **New York: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1975.**

These two books by the same author are about Jack and his robot brother, Danny. Although the plots are sequential, either book can stand alone. The first book explains how Danny came to be and some adventures he and Jack had. The second one deals with a community of robots who have escaped from their families and how Danny and Jack and their family help the robots. The books are set in the far future. Children will find the stories very intriguing. The readability level is about fourth grade.

Wilkes, Marilyn. ***C.L.U.T.Z.*** **New York: Bantam Books, 1982.**

This is a really exciting story about a twenty-second century family that advertises for a robot. The story tells of the many adventures and happenings that occur after a robot is added to the family. The vocabulary uses terminology of a future computer age: "cryobin" for refrigerator, "annums" for years. Experiences, housing, careers, transporation, and so on are all depicted as they may be in the future. The plot is fast-moving, holding the reader's attention throughout. The readability level is approximately fifth grade.

Yolen, Jane. ***The Robot and Rebecca and the Missing Owser.*** **New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981.**

What is an owser? A dog, of course, but you will need to read into the book to figure this out. This story is set in 2121. The setting and events of the story are written about things that may be in that time period. A rich lady loses her owser, or rather it is apparently stolen. Rebecca and her robot help her find it. This mystery story is quite involved but simple enough for third graders to enjoy.

Summary

Computers are here to stay. Children in today's world have known no other way of life. It is natural that they are interested in using them and learning about them.

Books about computers are an essential part of a classroom library. There should be books of all three types: computer literacy, programming, and fiction. Not every child will be interested in learning, nor needs to learn, to program, but for those who are curious about how programs work in the computer, such books should be available. There are ones even simple enough for elementary children to use.

As for learning the technical information about how a computer works, again this is not essential for everyone. We do not need to know what makes a telephone work in order to use one. For those

children who are interested in such information, however, there are books written at a simple level which should be available for them to read. Also such books should be kept in the classroom for reference as questions arise.

All children should be exposed to areas such as the use of computers in many different ways in our lives today, career opportunities in computer-related fields, and speculation about computer use in the future. These are areas which will help children adjust to their world and learn to live in it effectively.

As for the fictional books, a wide variety should be available, allowing children to select those they want to read. There are so many good story books, and more are being published frequently. There is no doubt that if teachers expose children to samples from this area, they will definitely want to read them. Such books may also serve as a stimulus for creating science fiction writing by children.

If your goal as a teacher is to develop children who want to read, provide meaningful and interesting reading sources. Computers have opened up a broad area of resources that your children will be excited about. Take advantage of this interest.

Maribeth Henney is an associate professor in elementary education at Iowa State University in Ames, Iowa. She may be contacted at: 107 N. Quad, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011.

CALL FOR MANUSCRIPTS

The *Wisconsin State Reading Association Journal* is seeking articles that are aimed at improving the quality of reading instruction. Each issue is developed around a predetermined theme; however, articles not related to the theme but deserving publication are encouraged. Each theme is selected to be wide enough in scope to allow for many approaches and kinds of articles. The *WSRA Journal* especially encourages the submission of descriptions of research, poetry, practical papers, etc.

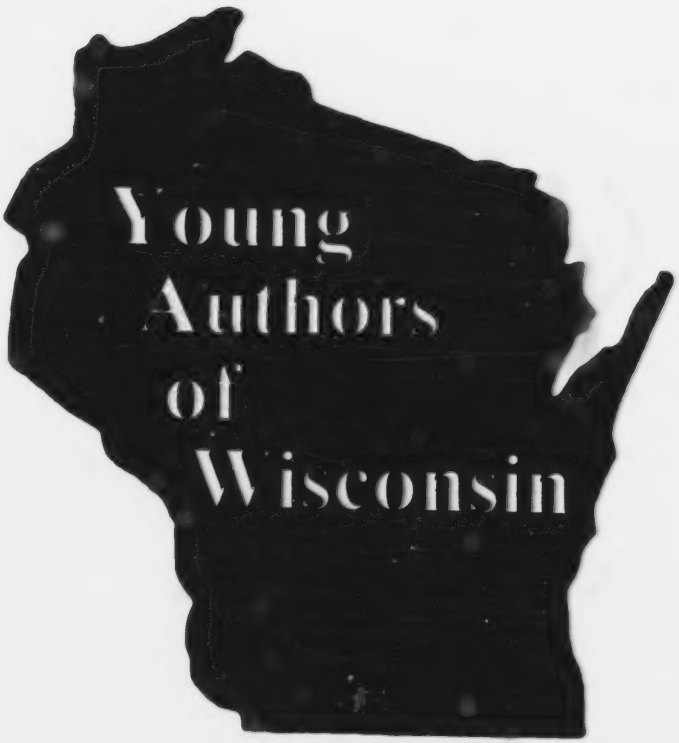
Themes and deadlines for 1986-1987 are:

Volume 31, Number 2	Theme: **Helping Students Remember: Effective Approaches to Comprehension Instruction** Deadline: October 1, 1986
Volume 31, Number 3	Theme: **Reading and Writing Across the Curriculum** Deadline: February 1, 1987
Volume 31, Number 4	Theme: **Reading for All Ages: Perspectives on Emergent Reading and Adult Literacy** Deadline: May 1, 1987

Submissions for these issues should be sent to:

James Devine, Editor
WSRA Journal
2620 Richardson Street
Madison, Wisconsin 53711

Refer to page 82 for publication policy and guidelines.


Young
Authors
of
Wisconsin

The Wish

Once there was a bunny named Jill who lived in a town called Hop Up. She had only one wish: it was to become an Easter Bunny. She went to sleep and dreamed about being an Easter Bunny.

In the morning she heard the other bunnies talking about a contest that was going to be held at the Town Square. Of course, Jill went.

The first part of the contest was to see if every bunny knew where all the hiding places were in town. There were seven bunnies in the contest.

The leader of the contest showed each bunny a map of Hop Up. They had to name every hiding place in Hop Up. Two bunnies failed. There were five bunnies left. One was Jill.

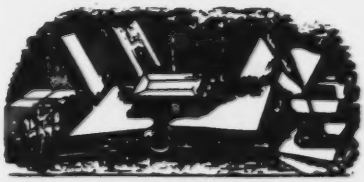
The next part was to see how fast they could hop. There were one hundred yards marked on the front lawn.

The leader of the contest lined the bunnies up on the white line. They were off! Two more bunnies failed.

There were three more bunnies left and one more part of the contest. The last part of the contest was to see how good their hiding places were. The leader of the contest gave each bunny an egg. Two bunnies did not do very well. One bunny just set his egg down in a birdbath. The other bunny hid his next to a house. Jill hid her egg in a Poison Ivy patch.

Jill won! Her wish came true. She hopped away on Easter Eve feeling very, very happy. THE END (I just love happy endings!)

Kathryn Scott
Second Grade
Victor Haen School
Kaukauna, Wisconsin
Mrs. Kathryn Elliott, Teacher



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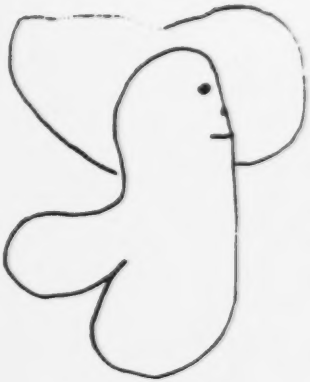
The Big Hunt

It was a quiet evening with a slight breeze blowing through the trees. As we walked into the woods we watched the squirrels playing in the leaves under a large, old, knotty tree. As we started on our way, I looked up and to my surprise, an eight point buck was staring us right in the eyes. I raised my bow and the buck leaped into the cedar trees. My dad and I snuck down the trail and peered into the dark swamp-like forest. I saw the buck heading for the underbrush; I drew back my bow and launched an arrow into the side of his chest. He dropped to his stomach and took off running like I never saw a deer run before. We walked to the truck to put our gear away and get our flashlights. We found blood soon and followed it to the point where I had shot him. Within fifty yards we found him lying in a pile of dead cedar trees. That was the proudest moment of the hunt.

Mark Menting
Eighth Grade
Gerrets Junior High School
Kimberly, Wisconsin
Marlene Straubel, Teacher

If I were a fish
I would gracefully
Swish my tail,
Side
to
side,
Making short little
w a e v s,
Telling other fish my name,
Without touching
b
o
t
t
o
m.



Patricia Kickland
Second Grade
Victor Haen School
Kaukauna, Wisconsin
Mrs. Kathryn Elliott, Teacher

Virginia

Millions of years ago there was
no state of Virginia. There was
only the land. And for millions
of years there was only the
water.

The water finally left. Later mountains
rose out of the earth. No
people were here yet. But there
were plenty of dinosaurs.

You can still see footprints
in Virginia today.

Virginia has blue mountains. You
may be surprised when you
see them. They are called Blue
Ridge Mountains.

The people of America
fought against England.
It was called the
Revolutionary War.

Jamestown in Virginia
has become a National
Park. There are people
there and they dress
and act like the people
in the past.

Thomas Jefferson
was an inventor.
He invented a bed
that came out
of the wall
and a seven day
clock for his home.

Once people thought
tomatoes were poison.
Thomas Jefferson proved
that they weren't by
eating one.

Allison D. Landro
Third Grade
Electa Quinney School
Kaukauna, Wisconsin
Bill Trarbach, Teacher

"My Canoe"

One afternoon
A little before two,
I decided to ride
In my little canoe.
I stepped aboard
And tied my shoe,
But without a warning
My shoe went through!
I sat there and thought
While my foot turned blue,
"How did this happen
For I have not a clue?"
Well, I couldn't waste time
So I removed my shoe,
And to repair this piece
I used by trusty old glue.
You may think it's funny
But that's what I'd do.
So do not laugh
It may happen to you!

Kim Warner
Fifth Grade
Electa Quinney School
Kaukauna, Wisconsin
Miss Sue Coenen, Teacher

WSRA

On the TV there appeared a screen that I could play checkers on. The spaces were green, hot pink, and midnight blue. That picture stayed on for about ten seconds. After that, flashed what looked like words that were printed backwards which said, "HELP ME. I AM LOST IN ANOTHER WORLD." Then on came a screen of orange. Purple polka dots grew on the screen one by one. After the whole screen was purple, it suddenly changed to a picture of an old tree with all its branches twisted. In its trunk seemed to be a door. The screen blackened for a moment. A picture of a teenage girl came on. She had long, brown hair and an expression of sadness on her face. The screen went blank again. This time it stayed blank.

What I had just seen puzzled me. I couldn't get it out of my head. I decided to take a walk in the woods behind my house. I was walking along when I saw the same tree I had seen on TV. Everything was the same; even the door was there. I had never noticed this tree before. I thought I had explored the whole woods.

Drawn by some strange power, I peered inside. Engraved in the wood was a picture of the girl. I could make out the picture even though the inside of the tree was dark. I became frightened and ran back to my house.

The next day I had to go back to that tree. This time I stepped inside the tree. I don't know the cause, but something made me sleep. When I came to again, I was in a totally different world.

The unique world was unlike the real world in many ways. The sky was green, not a dull green but a bright, awakening green. The grass was pink, a soft, quieting pink, a baby's pink. Instead of using cars, the people walked. A few of them were riding bicycles. There were no skyscrapers. Each building was either one or two stories tall.

The people were short. None of them was over four feet tall. They weren't skinny either. They were all fat. I mean, they almost could be mistaken for beach balls. There seemed to be no different races. Instead of their hair being brown, black, or red, it was orange (a bright orange) or gray. The people looked like dolls.

I was standing there when the same girl I had seen on the TV and in the tree trunk came to talk to me. She told me her name was Kayla. Kayla and her family had moved into the house I now lived in when she was fifteen. While her family was unpacking, she had gone to explore the woods. She had come across the same tree I had. She had stepped inside also. Then she had fallen asleep like I did. Kayla was told she couldn't go back to the real world until somebody came to exchange places with her. I was that person.

Days and months passed. It turned out that the people were very friendly. I stayed with a family of five. The father worked as a scientist. The mother stayed at home with their youngest child. He was three real world years old (in their time-about one week). The other two children were at school.

I was there because the father was running experiments about people from the real world. They got the people to their unique world by the magical tree. Since they had started, they had studied about twenty people from the real world. They were studying my brain waves, which were much the same as theirs. They also studied my anatomy, which was different from theirs. The scientists couldn't figure out what my heart and my muscles did. I told them as much as I knew about the heart and muscles.

One day my successor came. I was just getting used to the people and the scenery. I was sad to say goodbye because I knew I wouldn't be able to keep in touch with them or come back again to visit. I was, however, happy to go back to the real world.

When I returned to the real world, all of my friends were in their eighties. I tried to tell people my story. They thought I was insane. A psychiatrist had me committed to an institution.

Years went on and on. One day I died. I thought nobody noticed. It was then that I awoke. That dream bothered me all that day. I had to clear my head of it. I decided to take a walk in the woods. It astounded me when I saw the tree that had been in my dream. I didn't look inside because I didn't want to take any chances. I was scared and ran back to the safety of my house.

Debra Meyer
Eighth Grade
Hustisford High School
Hustisford, Wisconsin
Mrs. Shirley Elford, Teacher

What is love?
Love is a gentle blowing breeze sweeping over a grassy side.
Love is two people sharing and caring about, and with each other.
Love is clouds in the sky, gliding across the dawn.
Love is animals in th widerness trying to feed their young.
Love is animals being in the woods.
Love is two friends caring about each other's feelings.

Lisa Duchaine
Eighth Grade
Hillcrest School
Aurora, Wisconsin
Rose Olson, Chapter I Teacher

Friendship

For all the times
I have been hurt
I know you have been too.
It's been hard deciding
Just exactly what to do.
One minute our friendship
Is the best in the world,
But before you know it,
We're in a quarrel
Talking about each other
Behind our backs,
Really not knowing
All the facts,
I'm not being innocent
Or blaming you.
I'm only saying,

A friendship takes two.

Tina Schmidt
Eighth Grade
Hustisford High School
Hustisford, Wisconsin
Mrs. Shirley Elford, Teacher

It was warm for September. School had been in for a week, but the weekends were still ours, not yet given up to book reports and term papers. Stacy had grabbed my arm in the hallway that day, out of breath from running after me.

"There's a concert at Turner Hall tonight at seven. It's only five dollars and you have to come with me." And then off she had run, disappearing into the crowd and leaving me, mouth agape, in front of my geometry room.

I had agreed, and so there I was at 6:15, bouncing along in the backseat of the car, listening to Stace and her mom argue and saying a heartfelt goodbye to a week's pay.

"All right, I want you girls to remember that I'll pick you up at eleven, ok? If anything happens you know where to call me. And if anyone threatens you..."

Stace rolled her eyes. "God, Mom, I'm sure. Nothing's gonna happen."

The car pulled up in front of an old yellow brick building in an industrial section of the city. I opened my door, stepped out, and froze. My small town, middle-class mind went into shock. There was a crowd gathered outside the doors. Black leather abounded, along with mohawks, spikes, black eye-liner, and chains. Behind me, the car pulled away.

"Ohmigod," breathed Stace at my side. "We're going to die."

So there we were, two short, thin, very un-threatening girls dressed in t-shirts and jeans, surrounded by bondage gear and skull earrings. We looked more than a little out of place.

"Ok," I said, slowly regaining my composure. "Let's... mingle."

We crossed the street and sat down on a step near the door. The setting sun cast a grey-yellow haze over the scene, and conversations were smothered in the dinosaur roar of the huge grey buses. The smell of exhaust mixed with the sharp odor of stale beer from a nearby bar. I checked my watch.

"It's seven. Why aren't the door open?" Stace and I had by this time overcome our fears and so we sauntered up to the door, where we were greated by a stick man with eyes that matched the sidewalk and skin that matched the yellow brick. He took our money and we walked inside.

The room was smaller than I had expected. The taped music thundered hollowly out of the speakers at one end and bounced off the high, arched ceiling and returned to the stage with its pastoral backdrop. Thick rubber mats lined the walls; the hall was usually used

for gymnastics. A few people stood around the edges of the room, talking or merely watching the others. It was one of the latter that caught my attention. A short, thin young man leaned against the stage, his black eyes barely visible beneath a thick fringe of dark brown bangs, staring off into the middle of the hot, damp air and slowly tapping his foot to the beat of the music. I was instantly infatuated, and I started drifting towards the front of the stage, studiously examining the floor and ceiling alternately. Stace called me back.

"Let's go outside. It's too hot in here, and I want to call someone."

Back out on the street, I sat on the curb while Stace plugged coins into a pay phone. My eyes wandered over the whole scene again. Most of the punks had headed inside, and the few stragglers walked aimlessly around the parking lot; nothing too exciting. I had been carefully studying the cracks in the asphalt when I heard slow, lazy footsteps heading our way. Yes, the toothpick with the eyes and bangs was ambling along the sidewalk, watching the traffic. Under the brittle white light of the sodium lamps I got a better look at him. Long, thin face, big, friendly-but-sleepy eyes, straight, narrow nose. As he passed us he flashed a tentative, crooked-toothed smile. I immediately jerked my head around, pretending to listen intently to Stace's conversation. He crossed the street, still moving slowly, and then arced back across the street again and into the building.

Stace hung up the phone. "Was he smiling at you? You are so stupid! Why didn't you say something to him? He's cute. Come on; let's follow him."

The sound of clapping could be heard from inside the building; the concert had started, and he was nowhere in sight. We headed to the front, and I forgot about him until the opening band had left and we were on our way outside. As we went through the doors we passed him on his way inside. Fine, ok; we couldn't turn around and follow him back in the building, so we waited five minutes and went back in. Once again, we passed in the doorway, heading in opposite directions. He smiled this time and hesitantly waved in greeting. Stacy, ever gregarious, grinned and waved back enthusiastically. I looked at the ceiling.

This was definitely not working, and it was too cold to keep going outside. We gave up on the idea of following him and stood about five feet away from the door, waiting for him to come in.

He never showed. We left our post eventually to go up to the stage, and half the concert went by without us seeing him. I was distraught, and was about to totally give up hope when someone tapped my shoulder. It was him. Does this sound like one of those little romance stories you read in cheap women's magazines, pecked out between

soaps and PTA meetings? I can't help it if it does; this really was the way it happened, and I really was very happy to see him. He leaned forward and shouted something unintelligible in my ear.

"What?" I yelled.

He leaned forward again. "What's your name?"

"Susie!"

"What?" He started laughing.

"SUSIE!" My throat felt as if it was being ripped out. He nodded and we watched everyone dance.

Everything was going well until the second-to-the-last song. The guitarist, his face obscured by stringy, black hair, brought out a pitcher of beer. After pouring a glass, he walked to the front of the stage and, looking very grave and very solemn, dumped the rest of it on our heads. I didn't look away in time, and so I ended up with half a pitcher of beer in my eyes. Not a pleasant situation. Someone grabbed my arm and dragged me out to the lobby, steering me towards the bathroom.

"Are you ok? What happened?" The toothpick frowned and leaned back against the window sill.

"I just got beer in my eyes and it stung a lot. Everything's okee-dokee now." There was a pause, and I looked over his shoulder out the window. "What's your name?"

"Kyle. Your's is Susie, right? I couldn't hear anything in there."

"Yup, yeah, Susie. How old are you?"

"How old are you?"

"I asked you first."

He smiled. "I'm 18."

"Ok, right. I'm 16. Or actually 15; my birthday's next week, though, so that's close enough, I guess."

There was another pause, and in the lull we could hear the band playing. He stood up.

"Well, you don't want to miss the rest of the concert. Wait, where do you live? In Madison?"

I shook my head and brushed my bangs out of my eyes. "No, in Sun Prairie. It's out past East Towne. Where do you live?"

"Four-twenty-four North Gorham. In Madison." By this time we were back in the lobby. "Look, I've gotta go find some friends of mine. But meet me out front after the concert, ok?"

I nodded and we went back in, him walking off to the right and me going up front by Stace. The band finished the song, left the stage, and came back for an encore. I missed most of it because I was twisting around looking for Kyle. He had completely disappeared.

Then the concert was over. Above us, the fluorescent lights came on, blinding half the audience. Stace and I joined the throng at the door.

"Ok, so what happened? What's his name?"

"Kyle. He's 18 and he lives at 424 North something; that's all I know. We're supposed to meet him out front, though, so..."

Stace interrupted me. "What time is it? It's not after eleven, is it? My mom will make us leave right away if she's here."

We were in the lobby. Kyle was standing in the corner alone, and he motioned us over. "Hey, hi; did you like the concert?"

I nodded quickly. "Yeah, it was fun. Do you know what time it is?"

He looked at his wrist. "It's 11:30. Do you guys need a ride home? I'd take you back, but you'd have to give me directions, 'cause I've never even heard of Sun Prairie before."

Stace grabbed my arm and started to pull me out onto the street. "Ohmigod, my mother has probably called the police already. We have to leave now."

Kyle followed us out, and we paused on the curb. Stace's mom was across the street in her car looking very panicked, and Kyle's friends were all leaving. Stace and I began to cross the street.

"Well, hey," he called, "do you come in to Madison a lot?"

I nodded. "Down on State Street, yeah."

Well, ok then; I'm down there all the time, too. I'll see you around."

By this time Stace and I were at the car. I waved goodbye to him. "Yeah, see you around."

As the car pulled away, Stace turned around and looked at me. "You got his phone number, right?"

I shook my head.

"Well, ok, it's in the phone book, so we can just look it up."

I shook my head again, looking sheepish. "I don't know his last name, and he doesn't know mine. It never came up."

Stace hit me in the arm. "You are so dumb! You'll never see him again! I don't believe this." She looked out the window in disgust.

"He'll be at the next hardcore show. Or I'll see him on State Street. Hey, I know his address. It's 424 North something beginning with a 'G', I think."

That all happened last night. It's Saturday morning now, and I'm sitting in Stacy's living room, drinking a Coke and flipping through a Madison phone book. Stace is coming in from her brother's room, where she found another phone book, and is about to join me on the floor.

I put down my Coke. "Ok, we're looking for 42..."

"Yeah, I know, a Kyle on 424 North something. I get M through Z. Give me some of your pop."

Susie Knes
Sun Prairie High School

Depot

Tall, extravagant hats,
Atop properly brought up ladies,
Seemed to float by themselves
Through the small crowd.

Excited children weaved
Through the exhausted group,
And men with slicked back hair
Stood in line, waiting patiently
To purchase tickets.

Black smoke flowed out
Of the soot covered stack,
As a man called for passengers.
.....
The wind blows a dry leaf
Across my white tennis shoes,
White as the building once was.
I walk past the old depot,
And down the neverending tracks.

Jean Veenendaal
Sun Prairie High School

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Wisconsin State Reading Association

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Literacy, literature, and reading aloud

Rosalind Wold
Viterbo College
LaCrosse, Wisconsin

In *Becoming a Nation of Readers* (1985), the National Commission of Reading defines literacy as follows:

> For each age, there are fables, fairy tales, folk tales, classic and modern works of fiction and nonfiction that embody the core of our cultural heritage. *A person of that age cannot be considered literate until he or she has read, understood, and appreciated these works* (p. 61).

How can children become enthusiastic, successful, fluent, literate readers? According to *Becoming a Nation of Readers,* reading aloud constitutes the single most important activity for building the knowledge required for the eventual success of emergent readers and provides positive benefits for development beyond the novice stage as well (p. 23).

As this review of the literature will show, reading aloud can indeed play an important role in fostering the development of literate readers --those who can and do *read, understand,* and *appreciate* literature and nonfiction important to their culture.

Reading Aloud Fosters the Ability to Read

There seems to be an almost universal concensus among educators that reading aloud is an invaluable aid both in developing reading readiness and in promoting reading at all grade levels (Chomsky, 1972; Cohen, 1968; Durkin, 1961; Irwin, 1960; McCormick, 1983; Teale, 1981; Trelease, 1985).

In a longitudinal study testing the effects of systematic reading aloud of stories to children between the ages of 13 and 30 months, Irwin (1960) found that reading aloud led to an increase in spontaneous phoneme production in the experimental group after the age of 17 months.

In her classic study of children who had learned to read before entering school, Durkin (1961) found that all of the early readers in

her sample had been regularly read to at home.

A study of the effects of continued and regular listening of story books on second graders in New York (Cohen, 1968) showed that listening to oral reading produced significant increases in word knowledge, quality of vocabulary, and reading comprehension.

Chomsky (1972) found that a valid relationship does exist between reading aloud exposure and linguistic development, and the "exposure to the more complex language available from reading aloud seems to go hand in hand with increased knowledge of the language" (p. 33).

For older readers the outcomes of being read to have been found to be mainly attitudinal. Giermak (1980) found that daily reading to her remedial high school reading class improved the students' attitude toward reading as well as their listening, thinking, and writing skills. Examining the effects of reading children's literature to undergraduates in reading methods classes, Andrews, Moss, and Stansell (1985) reported positive attitudinal changes: students who were read to became more aware of how reading aloud can enhance and sustain a child's interest in and enthusiasm for reading instruction.

Reading Aloud Fosters the Ability to Understand

Reading aloud of good literature enhances young children's sense of story structure and understanding of the language of literature.

Recent research by Altwerger, Diehl-Faxon, and Dockstader-Anderson (1985) found read-aloud events to be social, meaning-construction interactions that enable children to internalize the process of text interpretation as a result of explicit adult modeling. In another study of the function of adult modeling, Roser and Martinez (1985) found that children tended to imitate the way the adult reader (parent or teacher) responded to the literature. If, for example, the adult mused over pictures or made many predictions the children were observed trying to do the same thing. Roser and Martinez also found that adults functioned in three distinct roles during read-aloud sessions: 1) As co-responders, i.e. the adult appeared to model for the children the process of the mature reader in interacting with text. 2) As informers/monitors, i.e. the adult supplied necessary background information or served to monitor the child's understanding of a story by making connections, modeling inferencing and the process of constructing meaning. 3) As director, i.e. the adult served to direct the child's attention to pertinent parts of the text.

In a comparison of early readers and non-early readers, Thomas (1985) also documented important differences in the reading environment and social interaction that parents provide. Parents of early

readers read to their children more times within a day than parents of non-early readers and rarely, if ever, allowed their children's questions regarding literacy to go unanswered. Further, the parents of early readers consistently structured dialogue to facilitate understanding of what was being read.

Reading Aloud Fosters Appreciation

According to Walberg and Tsai (1985) the two strongest correlates of reading achievement are reading attitude and stimulus materials in the home. The read-aloud experience seems to have a positive affect on attitude and provides stimulus materials in the home.

The read-aloud literary experience is a complex response made up of pictures, words, adult nonverbal behavior and adult commentary, and the range of thoughts and feelings adults attach to the experience (Tchudi, 1985). Appreciation of literature and valuing reading appear to be learned behaviors, or as Johnson (1956) states, "A fondness for reading is something that a child acquires in much the same way as he catches a cold--by effectively being exposed to someone who already has it" (p. 123). If this fondness is not caught at home, it is up to teachers to infect their students. Searls (1985) states that students must "be taught by teachers who themselves value reading, as demonstrated by their reading habits and attitudes.

Reading aloud appears to motivate children of all ages to read. Reading aloud to preschoolers helps the child look at reading as a necessary and integral part of life (Coody, 1973; Sims, 1977).

Arbuthnot (1969), while noting the importance of reading aloud to preschoolers, points out the greater need of the beginning reader for read-alouds. "The first year of learning to read may come as something of a shock. He generally thinks he will be reading by the end of the first day, and great is his amazement at the slowness of the process" (p. 34-35). Read-alouds at home and school can provide book experiences which keep the child wanting to read for himself.

Choosing a Read-Aloud Book

It is necessary when reading aloud to choose the book to be read from thousands of available titles. Knowing how to choose a good book is difficult. Arbuthnot (1969) cautions that "adults should not read aloud what is not worth reading in the first place. When a child listens to an adult read aloud, the selection takes on the prestige of adult approval" (p. 36). Adults should therefore make good decisions.

Huck (1976) notes that the appreciation of literature appears to be developmental and sequential. Trelease (1985) supports this observation by his suggestion that reading aloud should start with good, simple stories and build up to the classics of good literature. He also cautions, "Don't read what you think the child or class ought to hear. Good children's books were written to be enjoyed, not used as textbooks" (p. 76). Children like what they know. The familiar is the most comfortable.

Arbuthnot (1969) mentions that, "Reading aloud is the way to introduce children to exceptional books they might not choose for themselves or might not enjoy without the reader's enthusiasm" (p. 36). It has been suggested by various educators that books slightly above grade level be read to the class in order to stretch the children's imaginations and language experiences. Vandergrift (1965) notes that reading aloud enables the child to enjoy and appreciate what he could not manage on his own. Huck (1976) suggests that because modern television-reared children have developed interest and appreciation levels above their reading levels, it is necessary to read aloud to them in order to keep generating interest in books.

Recommendations

In summary, the following brief list of recommendations to parents and teachers appears warranted in light of the research and experts' opinions regarding the values of reading aloud to children and the development of literacy:

1. Read aloud to students at all grade levels.
2. Use read-alouds to model predicting questioning and inferencing.
3. Use read-alouds to introduce students to new authors and topics.
4. Make read-aloud materials available so those who can read the text on their own and desire to do can.
5. Use reading aloud to stimulate meaning--construction interactions.

For guidance in implementing these recommendations, consult the following resources:

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Research update: Children's literature and reading

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At least once in their undergraduate university careers, elementary education majors (and secondary education English majors) were indoctrinated in the value of sharing literature with their students. As Arbuthnot has pointed out, while...

> Books are not substitute for living...they can add immeasurably to its richness. When life is absorbing, books can enhance our sense of its significance. When life is difficult, they can give us momentary release from trouble or a new insight into our problems, or provide the rest and refreshment we need. Books have always been a source of information, comfort, and pleasure for people who know how to use them. This is as true for children as for adults (1957, p. 2).

The incorporation of children's literature into the reading program was also likely stressed. In an interview conducted by the *WSRA Journal* in 1982, John Stewig (p. 8), author of several books on reading, language arts, and literature, emphasized the fact that throughout the years in education, there has been a tendency to separate literature from reading, "...primarily due to an overly cautious concern that children should understand everything they read," something adult readers don't do. This separation of literature and reading was epitomized by the created "literature" of the basal readers of the 40's and 50's. However, as designers of the basal readers came to realize that without real literature--exciting stories about true to life people that students could care about--motivation for reading will be lacking, more and more "real" literature was incorporated into the basals. Also, classroom teachers have been encouraged to emphasize more children's literature within the classroom setting itself, through the books students are encouraged to recreationally read, through the stores shared orally with students, and through the activities that are assigned to supplement instruction in the subject areas.

Interestingly, however, a survey of the *Cumulative Index to Journals of Education* (CIJE) indicates that while there is a wealth of articles published each year on the topic of children's literature, few deal with actual research. The majority of the articles published share opinions, suggestions, and discussions on how to improve the use of children's literature. In this research review, therefore, emphasis will be placed on selecting and reviewing a few representative pieces of research in the following areas: differing views of what constitutes children's literature; children's book choices; embedded values in children's literature; bibliotherapy; and classroom teacher knowledge and use of children's literature. No attempt has been made to survey all the limited research in any one area.

Differing Views Of What Constitutes Children's Literature

In an interesting article published in *The Horn Book Magazine* (Adamson, 1985), there was a discussion of the results of an informal survey conducted by the Children's Literature Assembly of the National Council of Teachers of English to determine if different disciplines -- English, library science, and education--handle children's literature in unique ways. The brief article was entitled: "And Who Taught You Children's Literature?" The survey itself was a result of the differences among questions posed about a children's book by a group discussing the book. Someone "...asked, 'Will the children read it?' Another queried, 'How well does it illustrate its genre?' And a third wondered, 'Is it good literature?'" (p. 631).

The survey showed that even though "...the three disciplines employ some similar approaches to the subject (children's literature), no commonality of books considered in the classroom exists" (p. 631). Only *Charlotte's Web* by E.B. White was listed as a book frequently taught by all three disciplines. Education and library science seemed to be more interested in Newbery and Caldecott Award winners, but anthologies and older classics were more frequently preferred by English. Interestingly, library science and English respondents listed nearly double the individual titles as education. Not surprisingly, fiction books were more frequently listed. Only three of 97 authors listed by respondents could be considered non-fiction authors. Few poets were listed. Picture books were also preferred as indicated by the authors cited by the respondents. If teachers are more likely to choose to share and emphasize books they are familiar with from their undergraduate courses, it would seem that children may not be exposed to a variety of genres in children's literature. In the survey by Mangieri and Corboy (1981) discussed below, elementary classroom teachers indeed were more able to cite a children's fiction or picture book than books in any other category.

As would be expected, each discipline emphasized different aspects of children's literature. Learning theory and child growth and development as related to children's literature were more emphasized by library science and education, along with criteria for book and media selection and sharing books orally with children in the classroom. Unfortunately, this survey showed that while education emphasized "...the integration of literature with other subjects, such as language arts and social studies, and the response to literature through activities," it did so "weakly" (p. 632). The survey concluded that all three of the approaches to the study of children's literature were valid but that a combination of these differing viewpoints would greatly improve the quality of each approach.

Children's Choices In Books

In 1984, over 2500 children's books were published. Keeping up with what is produced yearly becomes very difficult for the classroom teacher and school librarian. Books are reviewed, of course, in a variety of sources including *The Horn Book Magazine*. In addition, a unique source of information is the "Children's Choices" listing, a project of the IRA-Children's Book Council Joint Committee. Produced since 1975, "...the listing is a yearly selection by young readers of newly published books that children themselves like" (p. 34). This year approximately one quarter of the books produced in 1984 were presented to students for review. Selected books were eventually grouped within the following categories: beginning independent reading, younger readers, middle readers, older readers, and all ages. The categories, however, are not restrictive, as books designated for younger children may equally be enjoyed by older readers. Individual copies of the "Children's Choices for 1985" are available free upon request by sending a self-addressed 6½ x 9½ inch (16 x 24 cm) envelope stamped with postage for two ounces to Children's Choices, International Reading Association, P.O. Box 8139, Newark, Delaware 19714-8139.

The use of children's opinions rather than or with the recommendations of experts is an imposing thought. Children are truly the final arbitrators of a book's worth. Isaac Bashevis Singer (cited in *Time*, December 29, 1980, p. 62), in his Nobel Prize acceptance speech, poignantly and humorously pointed this out in his ten reasons for writing for the young:

1. Children read books, not reviews. They don't give a hoot about the critics.
2. Children don't read to find their identity.
3. They don't read to free themselves of guilt, to quench their thirst for rebellion, or to get rid of alienation.
4. They have no use for psychology.
5. They detest sociology.

6. They don't try to understand Kalka or Finnegans Wake.
7. They still believe in God, the family, angels, devils, witches, goblins, logic, clarity, punctuation, and other such obsolete stuff.
8. They love interesting stories, not commentary, guides or footnotes.
9. When a book is boring, they yawn openly, without shame or fear of authority.
10. They don't expect their beloved writer to redeem humanity. Young as they are, they know that it is not in his power. Only adults have such childish illusions.

Embedded Values in Children's Literature

While children may read books for the reasons cited by Singer, authors are a part of their times. They have concerns and opinions about society and the world at large. In a recent article in *The Reading Teacher* (March 1986), Shannon investigated the social values emphasized in the favorite books of young children. Shannon trained evaluators to use a classification scheme which scored books as to whether they advocated individualism (people act in their own best interest, maximum personal freedom), collectivism (all for one and one for all, development of society as a whole creates the conditions for the development of the individual), or presented to a balanced approach (I'm important, but I have social obligations). Thirty books included in the listings of "Children's Choices" for 1978, 1980, and 1982 were evaluated. Twenty-nine appeared, in the view of the evaluators, to present an individualistic viewpoint; one seemed to provide a balanced viewpoint. In hypothesizing causes for this one-sidedness, Shannon suggests that the trend is likely due to the fact that...

> individualism may be so influential in the society that most participants in the Children's Choices surveys--children, regional leaders, editors, publishers, and writers--value personal concerns more highly than social concerns, and their choices in children's literature reflect their viewpoints (p. 662).

It does seem necessary that teachers view potential children's books to be used in the classroom with consideration that a balanced view of the world and its peoples needs to be presented through the selections made.

Bibliotherapy

By far the largest amount of research pertaining to children's literature concerns the use of books in bibliotherapy. Schrank, Engels, and Silke (1983) define bibliotherapy as "...guided reading designed to help individuals gain understanding of the self and environment,

learn from others, or find solutions to problems" (p. 23). The bibliotherapeutic process involves indentification, which is an affiliation between a listener/reader and a story character. "This affiliation process may enlarge an individual's view-of-self or reduce a sense of being different from others" (p. 23). Under identification are subsumed the processes of catharsis, where the conflicts or motivations of the character are shared and vicariously experienced by the listener/reader, and insight, where the listener/reader becomes the story character. Within the classroom, Schrank et al. suggest that researchers follow a developmental bibliotherapy approach where students after reading or hearing a story are asked to: summarize the story, discuss the character's feelings, identify with the character, explore the consequences of the character's actions, and draw conclusions.

With regard to research results, Schrank et al. (1985) concluded that bibliotherapy can likely change children's attitudes toward racial/minority or handicapped groups. Even though in some studies, the results were not statistically significant, generally "...teachers involved believed a bibliotherapy program was useful, enjoyable, and had positive effects on the attitudes of students" (p. 25).

Research results seem more contradictory on the question of using bibliotherapy to facilitate healthy development. Schrank et al. (1985) report that while several studies found improved self-concepts through the use of bibliotherapy, an equal or greater number found no change or only a trend toward positive change but without statistically significant results. Further research needs to be done.

They did find "...that bibliotherapy may be effective for helping elementary school-aged children reduce their fears..." (p. 26), although again the research evidence is somewhat contradictory. Most research evidence does not support the concept that bibliotherapy can favorbly affect academic achievement.

While bibliotherapy is no panacea, it appears to have some value for the elementary school classroom teacher. Schrank et al. do suggest that teachers carefully choose the books to be used, paying particular attention to the relevance of the problem or situation for the developmental level of the readers/listeners, the likelihood of identification with the characters by the students, and the overall literary quality of the story.

Classroom Teacher Knowledge and Use of Children's Literature

In another very interesting article entitled "Recreational reading: Do we practice what is preached?" Mangieri and Corboy (1981) report the results of a survey administered to 571 elementary school teachers and administrators in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and South Carolina. The respondents were asked to:

1. Name three children's books written in the past five years.
2. Name a children's book written in the past seven years in each of the following areas or genres: fiction, biography, poetry anthologies, fantasy/science fiction, picture books, and mystery/adventure.
3. Name three or more activities which promote recreational reading on the part of children (p. 924).

As alluded to earlier in this article, the results were disappointing. Approximately 91% of the teachers/administrators could not list three children's books published in the last five years. With regard to the second question asked, the following Table One depicts the results.

TABLE ONE

Percentage of elementary teachers and administrators who were unable to name a children's book published in the last seven years in a designated genre/area

Category	% Unable
Biography	98
Fantasy/Science Fiction	91
Fiction	79
Mystery/Adventure	92
Picture Books	81
Poetry Anthologies	97

The percentages tend to reinforce the responses collected on the types of children's books stressed by the different disciplines as collected by the Children's Literature Assembly and discussed above. Elementary educators appear to feel much more confident about fiction and picture books, though the percentages of educators responding adequately are still far below the desirable level.

With regard to the third survey question asking for three or more recreational reading activities which could be used with children, only 11% of respondents could give adequate answers. "Most popular responses were reading stories to children, sustained silent reading, and designing or acting out plays" (p. 924).

The results of this survey are not all that surprising. The last course an elementary classroom teacher may have on children's literature unfortunately may have been years ago. A wealth of material is produced each year. Not only are teachers going to have to work to update their knowledge (perhaps through the use of the "Children's Choices"

listing or having the school librarian keep them abreast of new publications), but also inservice opportunities will need to be available which keep teachers informed of the best new books available. Universities/colleges may need to offer courses which specialize in recent children's literature. Not only should these inservices/courses discuss new publications, but also ideas on how to use the materials well in the classroom need to be continually explored. Far too few teachers in the Mangieri and Corboy survey could adequately describe suitable recreational reading activities using children's literature.

Conclusion

This article has attempted to review a few representative pieces of research concerning various topics affecting children's literature. Little research, overall in comparison with opionion articles, exists on children's literature. Generally, the articles reviewed indicated that elementary school teachers are not well-versed in recent publications or in the various genres of children's literature or in activities to be used in the classroom in conjunction with children's literature, perhaps as a result of the undergraduate course work they took. Teachers, however, can make use of the listing of children's book preferences ("Children's Choices") produced each year to keep up with what is being published in the field. Teachers need also be aware that children's literature will reflect the social values of the authors and of the times, and selections need to be made which give a balanced view to students. Teachers should also realize that bibliotherapy can be used to positively influence children's attitudes to those different from themselves and to reduce children's fears if carefully selected and well used. Children's literature and reading should almost be synonymous in the minds of teachers. One cannot truly exist without the other.

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Bibliotherapy

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Teachers daily encounter students who are struggling to cope with difficult situations—a death in the family, a broken home, poverty, rejection by peers, or physical handicaps. How to deal with such students is a question with no simple answer. For many teachers, the idea of intervening in the life of a troubled student is unpleasant, and they are reluctant to do more than suggest a visit to the school psychologist or counselor. Other teachers want to help, but are not sure how to proceed. For these teachers, especially reading and English teachers, bibliotherapy might be the answer.

What Is Bibliotherapy?

Simply stated, bibliotherapy is the use of books to help people solve problems. The idea is not new. For example, the ancient library at Thebes bore the inscription "The Healing Place of the Soul," while the Alexandria library displayed the words, "Medicine for the Mind." In nineteenth century America, books were used in several mental hospitals as a regular part of therapy, and in 1840 a library was established for inmates in New York's Sing Sing prison. However, the term "bibliotherapy" was not actually used until 1916, when Samuel McChord Crothers used it in an article appearing in the *Atlantic Monthly*.[1] The subject was dealt with in detail by Caroline Schrodes in an unpublished doctoral dissertation (1949),[2] and in an article (co-authored with D.H. Russell) in *School Review* (1950), in which bibliotherapy is defined as: "A process of dynamic interaction between the personality of the reader and literature—interaction which may be utilized for personality assessment, adjustment, and growth."[3] Schrodes identifies three steps in the bibliotherapeutic process: identification, in which the reader associates himself or herself with a character or situation in a book; catharsis, in which the reader shares the feelings and motivations of the book's character; and insight, which takes place as the reader realizes that his or her situation can be dealt with more effectively by imitating or adapting the ideas from the reading material.[4]

Who Should Conduct Bibliotherapy?

Clearly, not every teacher is qualified to conduct bibliotherapy. Those who undertake to do so should possess certain personal qualities, including emotional stability, a genuine interest in working with others, the ability to listen, a willingness to learn about the community and its various ethnic groups, the ability to command respect and confidence, and the ability to empathize with others without moralizing, threatening, or commanding them. In addition, the teacher must have the skills to recognize the spiritual, emotional, and personal rights of others; establish both a healthy rappor and an honest relationship with them; function smoothly in social situations; and accept the student without prejudging, humiliating, or violating his or her feelings or need for privacy.[5]

When Should Bibliotherapy Be Used?

Bibliotherapy intervention may be undertaken for many reasons: to develop a student's self-concept, to increase or develop a student's understanding of human behavior or motivations, to help a student develop an honest self-appraisal, to provide a way for the student to find interests outside of self, to fulfill needs, to relieve emotional or mental pressures, to show a student that he or she is not the first or only person to encounter a problem, to show a student that there is more than one solution to a problem, to help a student discuss a problem more freely, and to help a student plan a constructive course of action in solving problems.[6]

Before undertaking bibliotherapy, a teacher must remember that it is more than just the casual recommendation of a certain book to a student—it is a deliberate course of action that requires careful planning. The first step in that planning is the determination of the true nature of a student's needs. For example, is the student whose mother has just died suffering from grief at the loss or from guilt at feeling no grief? Techniques for accurately determining the needs of a student include (1) observation, simply watching a student's reactions and behaviors and then comparing conclusions with others who know the student; (2) school records, which can reveal unseen physical problems, problems at home, or childhood experiences that may have left scars; (3) one-to-one conferences, conducted on a regular basis with each member of a class or for special purposes; (4) conferences with parents or guardians; and (5) carefully constructed writing assignments, especially journal writing, which can provide students with a means of revealing what is bothering them.[7]

How Should Bibliotherapy Be Used?

The second decision a teacher must make in preparing for bibliotherapy concerns the materials that are to be used. Here the teacher

must exercise caution—just because a book deals with the problem in question does not automatically make it the proper choice for bibliotherapy. In fact, books can produce negative results. For instance, assigned to read about the virtuous behavior of a character in a similar situation, a student might interpret the assignment as a criticism of his or her failure to handle the same problem more successfully.[9] The book, then, should be carefully examined to determine that it provides a fair picture of the problem, does not offer simple solutions to complex problems, and involves the reader in the solution to the problem. Another consideration is the literary merit of the book. A poorly written work—one that contains stereotypic characters, inconsistent plots, or unrealistic themes—will not only be of little value in bibliotherapy, but might also produce negative attitudes toward literature.

A third decision a teacher must make in preparing for bibliotherapy is whether to use the individual or the group approach. Individual therapy requires one-to-one sessions and is time consuming; however, it does offer the student the security of knowing that someone cares enough to listen. In addition, some students feel freer to express themselves in a one-to-one situation. However, if there are several students with the same needs or problems, group therapy can also be effective. The group approach allows students to share common experiences, thus lessening their anxieties. It can create a feeling of belonging and also can provide security to students who might feel uncomfortable in situations where they are singled out for special attention. Working in a group may lead a student to develop a different perspective and a new understanding of the problems of others.[9]

Regardless of whether the teacher chooses the individual or group approach, the basic procedures in conducting bibliotherapy are the same: (1) motivate the student or students with introductory activities; (2) provide time for reading the material; (3) allow incubation time; (4) provide follow-up discussion time, using questions that will lead the student or students from literal recall of information through interpretation, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of that information; and (5) conduct evaluation and direct the student or students toward closure. This involves both evaluation by the teacher and self-evaluation by the students.[10]

What Are the Limitations of Bibliotherapy?

A review of bibliotherapy research shows that bibliotherapy has been successfully used in changing attitudes toward minority groups, diminishing certain fears, helping students deal with death, and developing moral maturity.[11] It should not, however, be viewed as a panacea. Furthermore, its successes can be restricted by a variety of factors, including the student's readiness to see himself or herself in a mirror, the skill of the bibliotherapist, the materials used, the tendency of some students to rationalize away problems when reading about

them, the tendency of some to use literature as an escape, and the relationship of the student and the therapist.[12] It is also important to note that bibliotherapy is not the answer to deep-seated emotional or mental problems; the teacher should, of course, refer students with such problems to the appropriate professionals. Bibliotherapy can, however, be a valuable means of helping students cope with some of life's difficulties.

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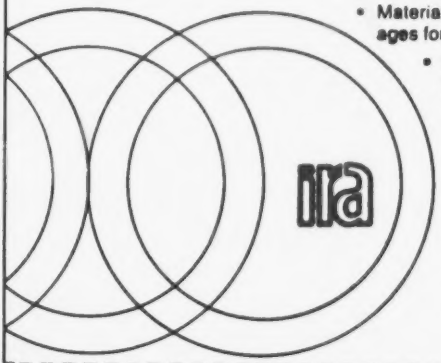

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